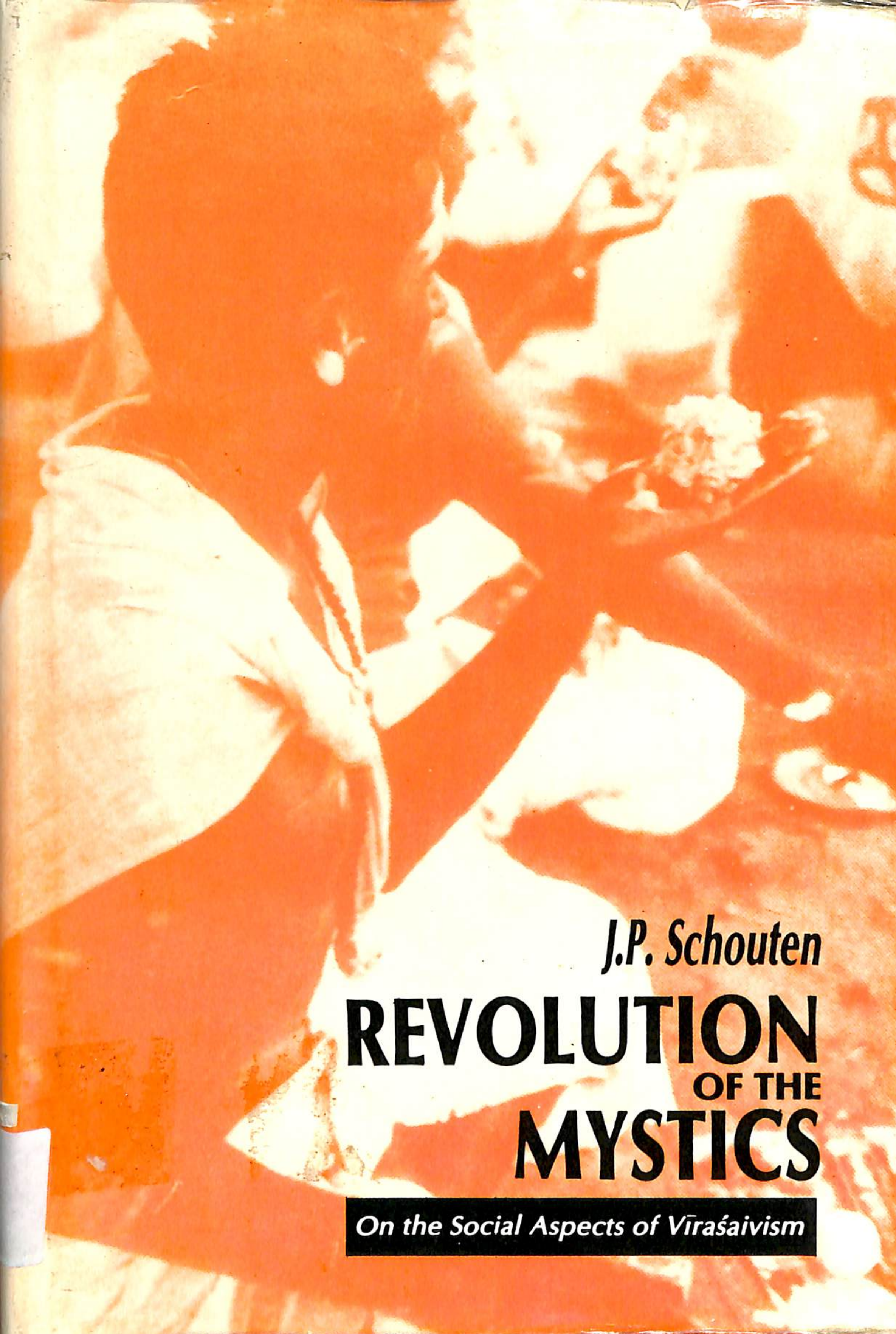

J.P. Schouten

REVOLUTION OF THE MYSTICS

On the Social Aspects of Vīraśaivism

J.P. Schouten

REVOLUTION OF THE MYSTICS

[redacted]

One of the most fascinating episodes in the religious history of Southern India is the rise of the Vīraśaiva movement. These 'heroic followers of Śiva'—also called Liṅgāyatas—are characterized by a unique combination of intense devotion and social reformation. The movement arose in the twelfth century under the charismatic leadership of Basava. Men and women from every background, highcaste as well as untouchable, joined the experimental community of the Vīraśaivas. They had their own sacred literature in the form of short poems in the vernacular language of the region: Kannaḍa. This literature reveals the far-reaching social ideals of these devotees. Contrary to the classical Hindu tradition, they rejected almost completely the caste system. They propagated the spiritual value of every kind of labour, connected with a strong emphasis upon social service.

This study depicts the social views of the twelfth century reformers on the basis of their own texts. But also later developments are taken into consideration. Fifteenth century scriptures and ethnographical data from the colonial period give an impression of the reinterpretation of the old ideals and the consolidation of the community within the Hindu culture. The modern period is described with the help of anthropological research and the views of present-day Vīraśaiva leaders. Four themes are thus discussed: caste; work and property; position of women; and education.

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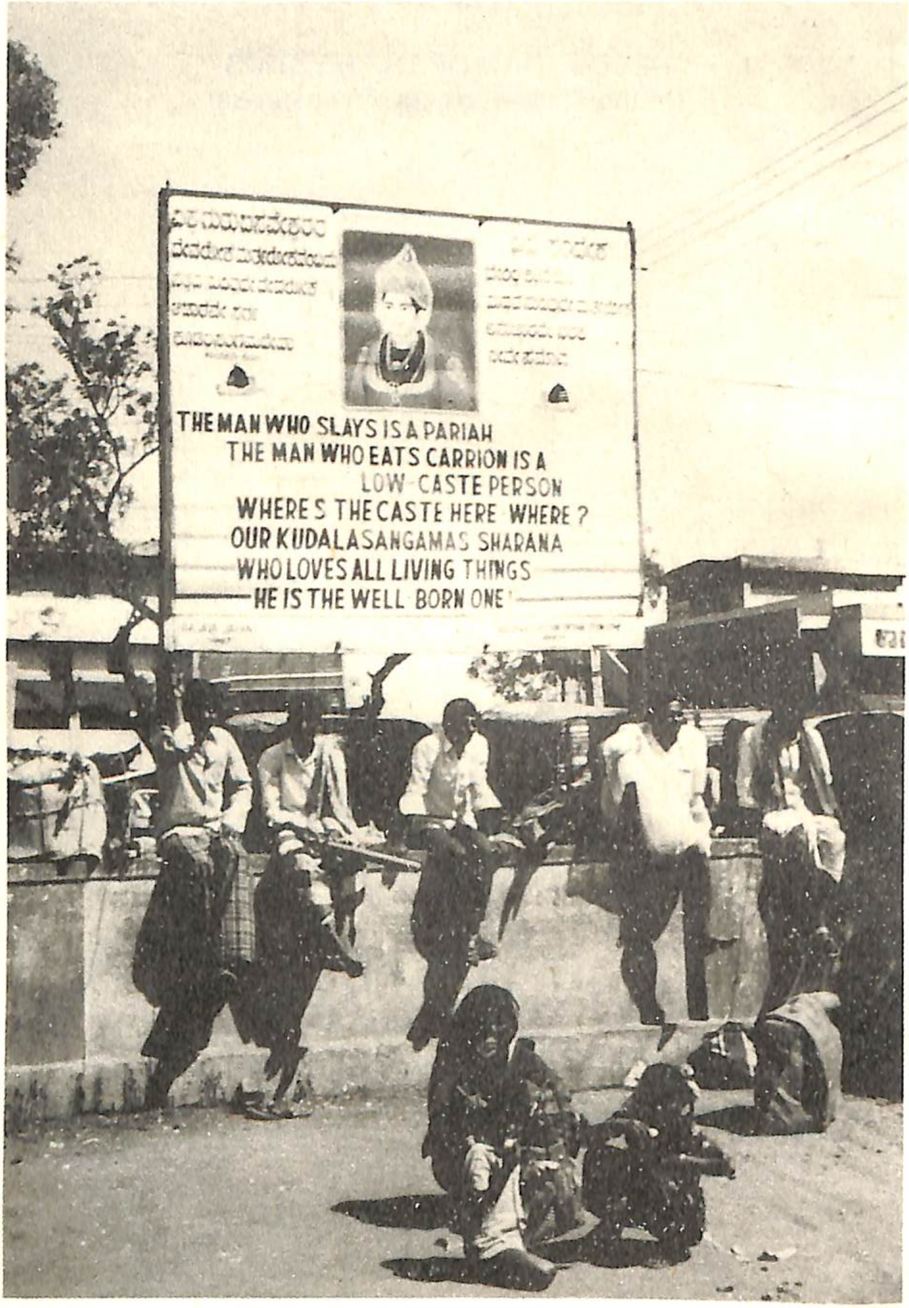
THE MAN WHO SLAYS IS A PARIAH
THE MAN WHO EATS CARRION IS A
LOW-CASTE PERSON
WHERE'S THE CASTE HERE WHERE ?
OUR KUDALASANGAMA'S SHARANA
WHO LOVES ALL LIVING THINGS
HE IS THE WELL BORN ONE!

1. Basava's vacana no. 590 on a billboard at the busstation of Haveri, Dharwar Dt. (see pages 56-57)

REVOLUTION OF THE MYSTICS

On the Social Aspects of Vīraśaivism

Dr. J.P. Schouten

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To Marty

Ubhayadṛṣṭi inadṛṣṭiyalli kābante,
dampati ēkabhāvavāgi nindalli...
(Allama, 1122)

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PREFACE

Discovering the world of Vīraśaivism was a fascinating undertaking to which I devoted with pleasure much of my time during the last years. Several study tours to Southern India appeared to be necessary in order to collect the material for this book. Many Indian scholars and leaders of the Vīraśaiva community received me kindly and provided me with most useful information as well as practical advice. It is impossible to mention all names; but I would like to thank explicitly the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Dr. Śivamūrti Śivācārya, the Jagadguru Māte Mahādēvi, Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅga Svāmīji, Immaḍi Śivabasava Svāmi of Kundur, and our friend Svāmi Vīrēśvara. I am grateful for the helpfulness of several researchers and librarians at Karnatak University Dharwar, Mysore University, Bangalore University, and the United Theological College at Bangalore. I wish to mention particularly the late Prof. Dr. P.B. Desai, Prof. Dr. R.C. Hiremath, Prof. Dr. M.M. Kalaburgi, and Dr. B.D. Jatti, former Vice-President of India.

I started my study of Vīraśaivism many years ago under the supervision of Prof. Dr. D.J. Hoens and, later, Prof. Dr. J.D.J. Waardenburg (now Lausanne). I am grateful for their encouragement to start this project. The process of writing the dissertation was supervised by my present 'promotor', Prof. Dr. Ria Kloppenborg. Her stimulating interest and critical comments constituted a valuable contribution to my work. Prof. Dr. K.V. Zvelebil, who had once taught me the principles of the Kannaḍa language, helped me with the interpretation of a number of texts. Also Dr. K. Parameswara Aithal (Heidelberg) advised me with regard to some difficult textual problems. Editing a text with diacritical marks on a personal computer has its own problems: Prof. Dr. Doaitse Swierstra of the Department of Computer Science at the Utrecht University solved many of them. My thanks are also due to the Rev. Dr. Peter Staples for the correction of my English.

I am indebted to my congregation, the 'Gereformeerde Kerk' of Soest, for granting me a two months' leave in order to make my last study tour to India. Financial assistance for travelling in India was received from the Netherlands Foundation for the Advancement of Tropical Research (WOTRO). The publication of this dissertation was made possible by a generous gift of the 'Stichting Het Scholten-Cordes Fonds' at The Hague.

This book is dedicated to Marty, my wife, who shared the joys and sorrows of Indian travelling, and was a great help, both in the research phase and with the preparation of the manuscript.

SCHEME OF TRANSLITERATION

Kannaḍa and Sanskrit texts are transcribed according to the following table. Modern geographical names, however, are given in the form which is locally usual. Likewise, names of modern authors, with the exception of religious dignitaries, are romanized as they use to do it themselves. The technical words are given, as a rule, in the Kannaḍa form and not in the Sanskrit form; e.g. 'dēvadāsi' and not 'devadāsī'.

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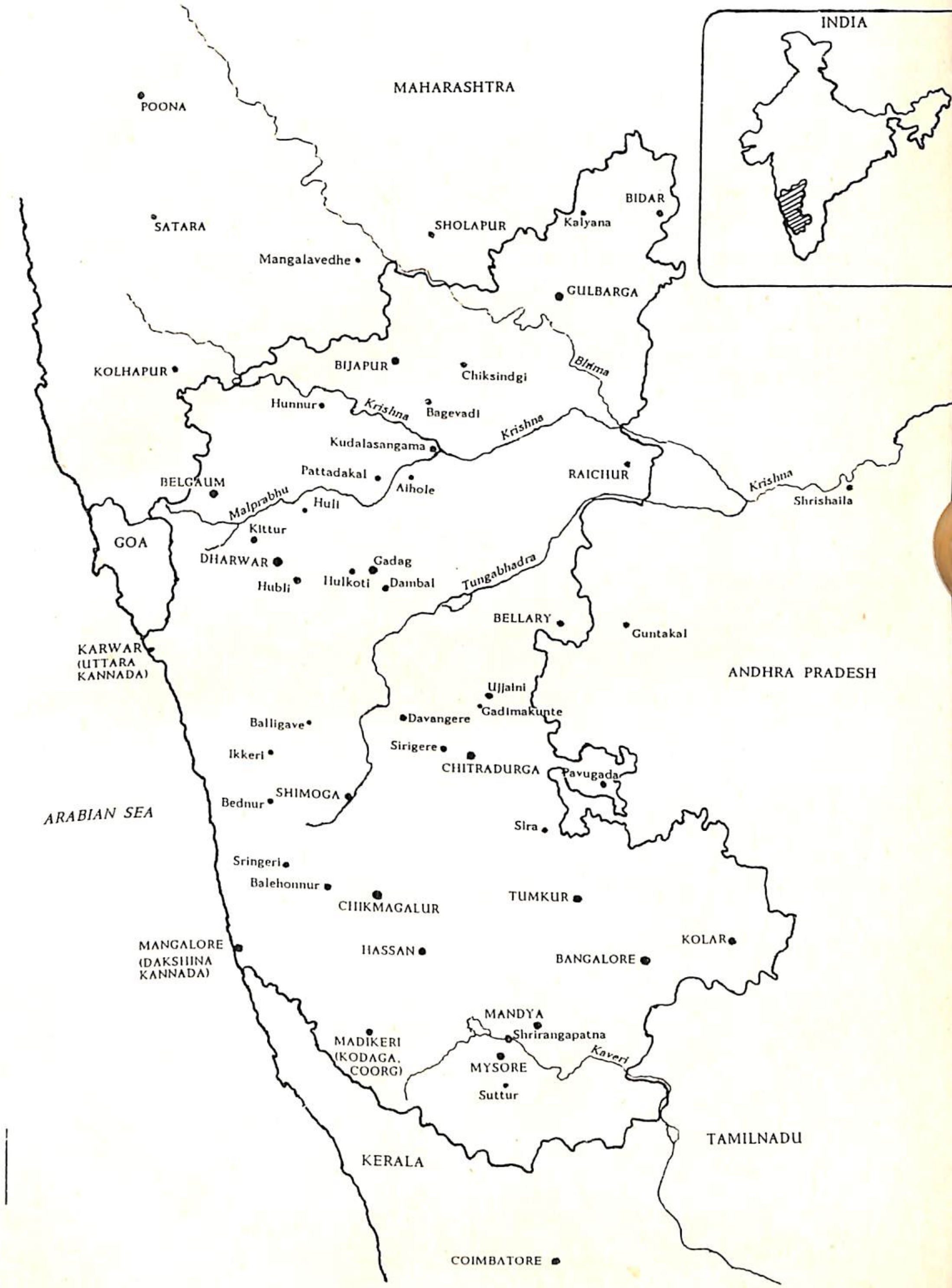
MAP OF KARNATAKA


INDIA
MAHARASHTRA
POONA
SATARA
SHOLAPUR
Mangalavedhe
Kalyana
BIDAR
GULBARGA
KOLHAPUR
BIJAPUR
Chiksindgi
Bhima
Hunnur
Krishna
Bagevadi
Krishna
Kudalasangama
Pattadakal
Aihole
RAICHUR
Krishna
Shrishaila
BELGAUM
Malprabhu
Hull
Kittur
GOA
DHARWAR
Gadag
Hubli
Hulkoti
Dambal
Tungabhadra
BELLARY
Guntakal
KARWAR
(UTTARA KANNADA)
ANDHRA PRADESH
Ujjaini
Gadimakunte
Balligave
Davangere
Ikkeri
Sirigere
CHITRADURGA
Pavugada
ARABIAN SEA
Bednur
SHIMOGA
Sira
Sringeri
Balehonnur
CHIKMAGALUR
TUMKUR
KOLAR
MANGALORE
(DAKSHINA KANNADA)
HASSAN
BANGALORE
MANDYA
Shrirangapatna
MADIKERI
(KODAGA, COORG)
Kaveri
MYSORE
Suttur
TAMILNADU
KERALA
COIMBATORE

INTRODUCTION

Devotion and Social Ideals

A remarkable religious movement arose in the second half of the twelfth century A.D., in that part of India which now constitutes the State of Karnataka. Its central concept was 'bhakti' - devotion. But it differed from the many other devotional movements in medieval India because of its social orientation. The adherents called themselves 'Vīraśaivas' - heroic, ardent worshippers of the god Śiva. Not only was their devotion for Śiva ardent but also their social idealism. Other bhakti movements, too, attracted men and women from various backgrounds; but it was especially the Vīraśaivas who welcomed into their community anyone who was interested: regardless of social status and economic position. The multifacetted movement, which thus came into being, aimed at a new lifestyle. Traditional concepts of purity and rules of conduct were criticised; because it was felt that people who were devoted to the same God could not be separated by human regulations. So ardent devotion for Śiva was combined with a strong social criticism. In opposition to the dominant culture, the Vīraśaivas developed new ideals: about the equality of all human beings, the value of all kinds of labour, and the necessity of education for all people.

The social values of the Vīraśaivas constitute the theme of this study. We will investigate which ideas regarding social structure and culture arose in this twelfth century movement, and how these social ideas were connected with the religious orientation and mystical experience. The texts of the early Vīraśaivas, mostly devotional poetry, constitute a rich source from which it is possible to reconstruct the conceptual world of those revolutionary mystics. This poetry had a special aim: it was intended to be memorized by the adherents of the movement; so it constituted the main content of religious instruction. Hence, we find in this poetry the core of Vīraśaiva teaching on mysticism and morality. Sometimes, the poems also enable us to draw conclusions about the practice of social life among the devotees. In addition, it is useful to consult the later hagiographical literature of the Vīraśaivas in order to obtain a clear understanding of what happened in their experimental community.

Not only the initial period but also the later history of the Vīraśaiva movement is interesting for our subject. The framework of this study does not allow a comprehensive description of the complete history of Vīraśaivism. Besides, not all periods of the eight hundred years' history of the movement are equally attested by literary evidence. Therefore, in addition to the twelfth century, three periods of Vīraśaiva history are chosen, which can be described by means of the available material with reasonable reliability. We will focus on the fifteenth century, when Vīraśaivism underwent a certain revival, characterized by reinterpretation of the early poetical texts and reorganization of the community and its monastic sections. Then we will fix our attention on the colonial period: particularly the nineteenth century. For that period we have at our disposal some valuable ethnographical accounts by missionaries and civil servants. Finally, we will focus our investigations on the modern period of post-Independence India. Anthropological and sociological research, as well as publications of and interviews with present-day Vīraśaiva leaders constitute the material for the modern period. In this manner, we will examine how the original social ideals of the movement were put into practice in different historical settings. On the one hand, we consider the effects of the revolutionary views of the early Vīraśaiva leaders on social reality. On the other hand, we are likewise interested in the way in which the original ideas were reinterpreted and adapted under the influence of changing historical circumstances.

The topics of our investigation include those aspects of the Vīraśaiva social teachings which are most remarkable in the context of Hindu culture: the views on caste; the interpretation of work and service; the position of women in the community and in society at large; and the educational ideals. These four topics enable us to grasp the scope of the social revolution which the Vīraśaivas advocated, as well as the close connection between profound mysticism and social awareness that is typical of their movement. But before we turn to our actual subject, it will be useful to sketch the outlines and the history of the Vīraśaiva movement; and to give a survey of the history of Vīraśaivism research since the seventeenth century up till the present day.

Origin of the Vīraśaiva Movement

The Vīraśaiva movement was founded in the second half of the twelfth century by a man named Basava.[1] His parents belonged to a prominent family of the highest caste: the Brāhmaṇas. Basava was born at Bāgēvāḍi, a provincial town in the northern part of present Karnataka: probably around the year 1105. His parents were devotees of Śiva and Basava was brought up with the values of religious observance and devotion. As a boy, Basava already demonstrated that he experienced religion in his own way: different from the traditional approach of his orthodox family. He protested against wearing the sacred thread which identified him as a Brāhmaṇa. According to some sources, he even refused to undergo the initiation ceremony of being invested with the thread (upanayana), which was obligatory for every Brāhmaṇa boy. Another version, more probable, is that he discarded the sacred thread before leaving his parental home. Apparently, Basava preferred a personal relationship with the godhead, not determined by the traditional prerogatives of his high priestly caste. Therefore, he left the familiar surroundings of his birth place and started his own spiritual quest. He went to Kūḍalasaṅgama, a sacred place where two rivers flow together. Here was a famous temple; and

[1] The best biography of Basava is doubtlessly: P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, Dharwar, 1968. See also: M. CHIDANANDA MURTHY, *Basavanna*, New Delhi, 1980; David EMMANUEL, *A Historical-Critical Study of Basava's Ethical Teachings*, M.Th. thesis, Serampore Univ., 1979; HARDEKAR Manjappa, *Basava: The Dimension of Universal Man*, Dharwar, 1966; JEERAGE Basavalingappa, *Who is the Founder of the Vīraśaiva or Lingayet Religion?* Bangalore City, 1935; S.C. NANDIMATH, 'Śri Basaveśvara', *Journal of the Karn, Univ. - Hum.*, Vol. VIII, 1964, pp. 209-224; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972; M.P. SAMARTHA, 'Basava's Spiritual struggle', *Rel. St.*, Vol. 13, 1977, pp. 335-347; *Śrī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration volume, Bangalore, 1967; H. THIPPERUDRASWAMY, *Basaveshwara*, New Delhi, 1975.

many scholars and ascetics resided in the settlement. Basava found a guru and studied the sacred scriptures of Hinduism at this centre of learning. He also developed his personal devotion for Śiva in the form as worshipped in the temple: the Lord of the Meeting Rivers. Basava spent a number of years at this sacred place of the meeting rivers. But the goal of his life was not to live outside the world. His spiritual discovery was, on the contrary, that devotion can also be practised within the society and that it is not necessary to renounce secular life in order to attain the highest level of mystical experience. After those years of preparation, he was able to combine spirituality and secular duties. He settled down in the city of Maṅgaḷavēḍhe, where one of his relatives held a high position in the court of the local ruler, Bijjaḷa II. Basava too obtained an appointment at the court: as junior accountant. He married a daughter from his relative's family, named Gaṅgāmbike. At least one son was born to them. Basava's career at the court was swift. The king had confidence in the young, intelligent accountant. Already after a couple of years, Basava was appointed as the king's chief treasurer: bhaṇḍāri. The king also arranged a second marriage for him with a girl from the court circles, named Nīlamma. But Basava was not only the successful court official: he also made his name with spiritual excellence, for which reason the people used to call him the treasurer of devotion: bhaktibhaṇḍāri.

Gradually, his spiritual achievements attracted more and more attention. A circle of adherents grew up around the treasurer of devotion. People were fascinated by his emphasis on personal devotion instead of traditional religious prescripts. Basava propagated a form of religion in which everybody could participate: even those who were regarded as untouchable according to the Hindu caste system. Although a Brāhmaṇa himself, he even developed a certain preference for devotees from those circles; and he associated freely with them: not recognizing any of the traditional restrictions. Spiritual seekers from other places came to Basava's house where they met with a warm welcome. Especially numerous religious mendicants found their way to Basava, who worshipped them as divine incarnations. His high position in the court enabled him to display an unusual hospitality, although it was rumoured that he also diverted money from the king's treasure to this goal.

The number of followers increased enormously after a major political event. Bijjaḷa II, a ruler from the Kaḷacuri dynasty, was a vassal of the Cālukya King Taila III, who reigned over a large kingdom from the city of Kalyāṇa. The latter, however, was weak and he had to give up part after part of his empire to revolting vassals. Bijjaḷa too seized the opportunity and he succeeded in his usurpation. He ousted the Cālukya king and assumed his place on the throne of Kalyāṇa. It was about the year 1160 that Bijjaḷa's court shifted to Kalyāṇa. This meant for Basava a considerable change too. In the great capital, many people could be reached by his propagation of a new kind of religion. Within a short time, Basava's residence became the centre of a spiritual community with a great number of members. Devotees from many places, even from outside the kingdom, settled down in Kalyāṇa. They came from all sections of society. Especially the despised low-caste people were attracted by this movement which also granted them a legitimate place; but many members of the high castes associated themselves with the new fellowship too. And the community also welcomed a large host of religious mendicants: jaṅgamas. Remarkable was that not only men but also women came to Kalyāṇa and played an important role in the community. They were all Śaivas: worshippers of Śiva. By joining the new devotional movement, they became Vīraśaivas: ardent worshippers of Śiva.

Ardent worship of Śiva was, indeed, the first aim of the movement. But it was worship in a new, revolutionary form. Basava rejected completely the traditional temple cult, dominated by the Brāhmaṇa priests. Instead, he propagated the worship of a small abstract symbol of Śiva: the liṅga, which every member of the community, male and female alike, wore on the body. Consequently, an official priesthood and prescribed rituals were no longer necessary: since everybody had the object of worship within reach. The goal of worship was, for the Vīraśaivas, a personal spiritual development which could ultimately lead to profound mystical experiences. Not only traditional worship, but also the classical scriptures were disregarded. Instead of the age-old religious writings in Sanskrit, to be explained by experts, a new literature arose. Many Viraśaivas, Basava first and foremost, wrote small poems in the vernacular language, Kannaḍa. Such a poem was called vacana - uttering. It became the symbol of a new, democratic expression of devotional experience.

Basava was the originator of this movement, but he was certainly not the only leader. Several accomplished mystics became members of the Kalyāṇa community and made their own contribution to the development of religious ideas and devotional practice. Among them, there were two men who had already participated for a long time in more traditional Śaiva schools: Allama and Siddharāma. They were to play a major role in the history of the Vīraśaiva community. They were attracted by the vivid spiritual life at Kalyāṇa, although they did not agree completely with Basava's radical social views. Most probably they saw new possibilities to propagate their ideas amongst Basava's followers; after their own schools had lost much influence as a result of the rise of the Vīraśaiva movement. Other important leaders were Basava's nephew Cannabasava and an itinerant woman mystic called Akka Mahādēvi.

The numerous devotees in Kalyāṇa assembled in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience': Anubhava Maṇṭapa. This was a meetingplace, founded by Basava, where spiritual discourses and discussions took place. Basava assigned the chairmanship to Allama; and, under his guidance, the devotees shared their mystical achievements and presented their spiritual poems. The democratic character of this institution was most surprising: men and women from all strata of society came together and made their contributions to the development of Vīraśaiva spirituality and doctrine. It was particularly this aspect of the community at Kalyāṇa which rendered it very popular.

The growing popularity of the Vīraśaiva movement was not appreciated by everybody. When the number of adherents increased, opposition increased similarly. The Brāhmaṇa establishment felt, of course, sidetracked; because the powerful community did not value their religious services. King Bijjaḷa, who first supported Basava, became afraid of his growing influence and disapproved of his egalitarian views. The king was a Śaiva himself; but he was not at all in favour of Basava's rejection of caste barriers.[2] In 1167, it came to a crisis. The king interfered and executed two members of the Vīraśaiva community for violation of caste rules. A great repression broke out; and almost all Vīraśaivas left the town. They fled in various directions. Basava himself went back to the sacred place of Kūḍalasaṅgama, where he passed away shortly after his arrival. King Bijjaḷa, however, did not live much longer: in the next year he was killed out of revenge by some extremists belonging to the Vīraśaiva movement.[3]

The death of Basava certainly did not bring the Vīraśaiva movement to an end. On the contrary, since the devotees were scattered all over Southern India, they were able to attract many people in various places. In spite of the repression, Vīraśaivism gained a firm foothold in Hindu culture. In this process of consolidation, it was felt to be appropriate to emphasize the agreements, rather than the deviations, with the dominant religion. Hence, the Vīraśaivas tended to present themselves as pure Hindus who shared the age-old religious tradition. This went so far that the role of Basava as the founder of the movement was relativized. Vīraśaivas even claimed that their school of thought already existed long before Basava. In their imagination, they sometimes traced the history of Vīraśaivism back to primordial times. Legends arose among them which related that five divine teachers, sprung from the five faces of Śiva, descended to earth, in each of the ages of the world under different names, in order to preach the eternal truth of Vīraśaivism. Basava would have been nothing more than a reviver of this religion that had existed from times immemorial. This curious construction, however, has more to do with the Indian predilection for unchanging eternal values than with historical reality. Apparently, there is a constant confusion on this point. Śaivism, the cult of Śiva, is very ancient indeed; and it is only natural that many elements of Śaivism are also found in Vīraśaivism. The movement of Basava did not arise in a vacuum: it joined in the general revival of Śaivism, which had already reached a peak in Kashmir during the tenth century and was eagerly supported in Karnataka by the Kālāmukha and Pāśupata schools. But the distinct religious and social convictions, devotional culture, and community organization of Vīraśaivism do find their origin in the teachings of Basava and his contemporaries.

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[2] Later tradition accentuated the contrast between the king and his treasurer by describing Bijjaḷa as a Vaiṣṇava (SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu*, 13th century) or even as a Jaina (VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌIṬA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa*, 1584; likewise the Jaina *Bijjaḷarāyacaritra*, 17th century). The names and insignia of the royal family and some contemporary inscriptions, however, indicate that Bijjaḷa was a Śaiva. See the elaborate treatment by DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, pp. 55-77.

[3] According to RĀGHAVĀṄKA, *Siddharāmacāritra* VIII:95 (early 13th century), Siddharāma ordered the murder of Bijjaḷa; according to SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* VII (13th century), it was Basava's order; but these accounts are not very trustworthy. See DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, pp. 94-107, 220-231.

Religious Teachings and Customs

The most remarkable phenomenon in Vīraśaiva culture is the custom of wearing on one's body the symbol of Śiva: the personal liṅga - iṣṭaliṅga. It was originally a phallic symbol, although this connotation does not play any role in Vīraśaiva perception. The personal liṅga is made of stone and it has the same form as the big liṅgas in Śiva-temples of which it is obviously an imitation. However, the form of the iṣṭaliṅga proper cannot be seen; because it is hidden in a coating, consisting of a black mixture of clay, cowdung ashes, and marking-nut juice. This is the actual object of worship: it has a globular form with a flat bottom so that one can place it on one's hand for adoration and meditation. It is about two centimeters high. Originally, devotees wore the liṅga, tied in a piece of cloth, round their neck, round their upper arm, or on their head. Modern practice is to carry the liṅga in a silver box which is suspended with a string over the upper part of one's body.[4] Some wear the string in the same way as the Brāhmaṇas wear their sacred thread! But the practice of liṅga-wearing (liṅgadhāraṇa) was intended to mark a non-Brāhmaṇa form of religion. In all probability, it was introduced by Basava; for there are no allusions to this custom in earlier literature. Liṅga-wearing is an outstanding example of popularization of worship. It provided the devotees with a personal cult form, equal for all, which rendered the services of religious specialists superfluous. That is exactly the significant feature of Basava's Vīraśaiva movement and, therefore, it is not surprising that liṅga-wearing became the distinguishing characteristic of the adherents. Liṅgāyata - liṅga-wearer - became the usual denotation of the Vīraśaivas in later days.

The liṅga is the most conspicuous symbol of Vīraśaivism; but it is not the only one. The Vīraśaiva tradition distinguishes eight sacred symbols: the aṣṭāvaraṇa (literally: the eight shields), including: guru, liṅga, jaṅgama, pādōdaka, prasāda, vibhūti, rudrākṣa, and mantra. The guru is the religious teacher who bestows the personal liṅga upon the members of the community. The jaṅgama is the religious mendicant who personifies the divine and is consequently venerated above all. The triad guru - liṅga - jaṅgama occurs frequently in Vīraśaiva literature as the most sacrosanct objects of worship. The pādōdaka is the water with which the feet of the guru or jaṅgama have been ritually washed; sipping this water is considered to be very purifying. Prasāda is consecrated food: eatables presented to guru or jaṅgama and given back to the devotee after being blessed. The vibhūti is sacred ash, ritually prepared of burnt cow-dung; devotees smear it on their body, particularly on their forehead. The rudrākṣas are the dried berries from a certain tree;[5] strings of these beads are worn round one's neck or wrist, and also used as rosaries. A mantra is a sacred formula; for the Vīraśaivas, there is only one mantra: 'Ōṃ, namaḥ Śivāya' - 'Homage to Śiva!'.

A convert to Vīraśaivism receives a personal liṅga from his guru during the course of an initiation ritual, called dīkṣe. Children born into the community already receive a liṅga at birth; but they are expected to

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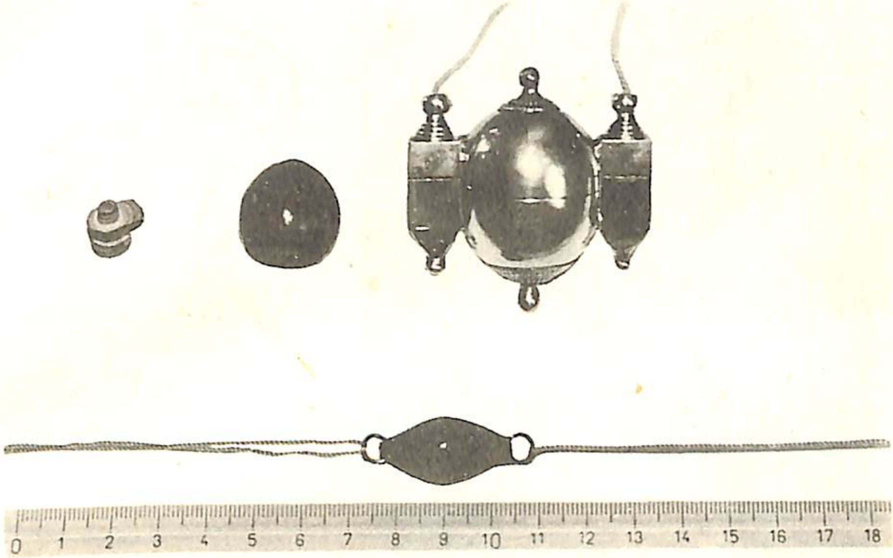
[4] See fig. 2 and 3.

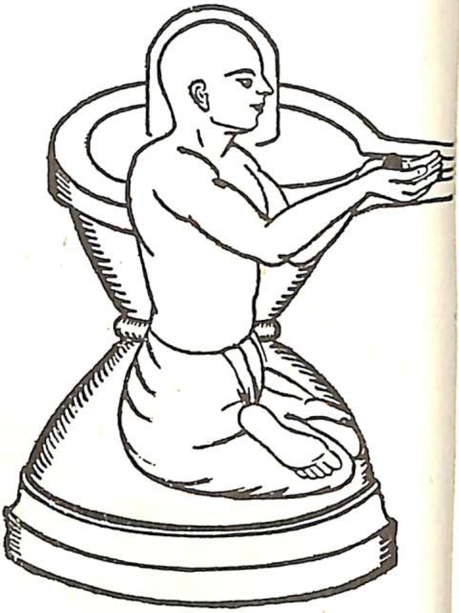
[5] The Elaeocarpus ganitrus.



2. The personal liṅga (iṣtaliṅga); above from left to right: the proper liṅga, the liṅga in its globular black coating, the liṅga in the silver box that is worn round the neck by adults; below: the liṅga in its oval coating as worn by children

3. In the temple at Kūḍalasaṅgama: the stone liṅga worshipped by means of a dripping water pot

4. *Liṅgāyata men worshipping their personal liṅga during a religious festival at Kūḍalasaṅgama (January 1989)*



5. *The liṅga represented as a man in a meditating posture (from M.R. Sakhare, History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion)*

6. *The liṅga placed on the hand for adoration and meditation*

undergo the dīkṣe ritual when they are grown up, like confirmation in Christianity. Worship is, in Vīraśaivism, pre-eminently liṅga-worship. Pious Vīraśaivas perform this ritual (pūje) three times a day. They take the liṅga out of its cloth or casket and put it on their left hand. The worship itself includes: pouring water on the liṅga; applying sacred ashes and surrounding it by rudrākṣas; offering to the liṅga sandal paste, rice grains, and flowers; burning incense and camphor; offering candy and betel leaves, accompanied by bell ringing. The offerings should be eaten by the worshippers as prasāda. Hereafter, they rub the liṅga, put it again on their left palm, and gaze at it with lowered eyes, while repeating constantly the mantra or another sacred text. Now, worship has become meditation. The core of Vīraśaiva spirituality is that it is possible, by this meditation on the personal liṅga, to attain unity with God. It is believed that the liṅga incorporates in a special way the divine presence. When consecrating the liṅga, the guru has attracted, by his spiritual power, the supreme spark from the devotee's own soul and he has placed it in this particular liṅga. Consequently, worship of the liṅga is basically the worship of one's own Self which is nothing else than Śiva. And meditating on this liṅga enables the devotee to realize the consciousness of the ultimate unity of soul and God.

Later Vīraśaiva philosophical speculation has resulted in a highly complicated system which includes an astonishing number of aspects of the relationship between soul and God (aṅga and Liṅga). But the basic convictions, which are shared by all Vīraśaivas from the initial period onward, are not so complex. Vīraśaivism tends to monotheism: Śiva is the only godhead to be worshipped. Other divinities play only a marginal role: they occur in the mythological lore, which is not completely absent in Vīraśaivism, but they are not considered to possess any real power. The background of this exclusive veneration of Śiva is a strong awareness of the unity of the Ultimate Reality. This is also the reason that the abstract form of liṅga-worship is preferred to the adoration of images of the mythological Śiva. The identification of liṅga and Śiva is total: in the Vīraśaiva scriptures, Liṅga is just another name for God. Unlike Śaṅkara's pure monism, Vīraśaiva philosophy does not regard the world as illusion. But unlike Rāmānujan's qualified monism, it neither teaches that the diversity of worldly existence is from eternity in God. According to the Vīraśaivas, it is Śiva's creative energy (śakti) which caused the existence of the world in its variety. This position is called śakti-viśiṣṭādvaita: monism qualified by śakti. But, however qualified, it is still monism: because basically there is only one Being. The divine energy, however, has an aspect of illusion (māye) on account of which man is not aware of the basic unity.

Therefore, the goal of Vīraśaiva religion is to remove the barriers so that man may experience unity with God. This way of liberation is classified into six stages, which all have their own spiritual characteristics. This system, which is typical of Vīraśaivism, is called the ṣaṭsthala-siddhānta - the doctrine of the six phases. The first phase is the bhakta-sthala - the phase of the devotee. Obviously, going along the path to final liberation always starts with devotion. The distinction between soul and God is experienced in that stage as very great; and the only means to reach God is devotional surrender, together with the observance of moral prescripts in order to overcome the power of desire. The second phase is called māhēśvarasthala - the phase of the master. Here, devotion is still very important; but the emphasis is on discipline and endurance. The devotee must resist all kinds of temptations. Then comes the third phase: prasādisthala - the phase of the receiver of grace. The devotee has experienced the divine grace and so he is able to devote his whole life as an offering to God.. The fourth phase is called prāṇaliṅgisthala - the phase of the Liṅga in the life-breath. Now, the devotee experiences that the Liṅga is in his own life-breath: God dwells in his soul. Gradually, the distinction between soul and God is decreasing. That is especially clear in the next stage: the śaraṇasthala - the phase of the surrendered. In the figurative language of Vīraśaiva literature, this stage is often described in terms of marriage: the devotee being the wife of the Lord. Complete surrender is the characteristic of the śaraṇasthala; and this is regarded as so important that 'śaraṇa' even became an equivalent for 'accomplished devotee' or 'saint' in Vīraśaiva terminology. Yet, it is not the final goal: there is still one step to make after this passive stage. The last phase must be reached: aikyasthala - the phase of union. In this sixth stage, the devotee attains consubstantial unity with the divine. Soul and God are no longer separated; and the devotee experiences the ultimate liberation (mukti). The cycle of rebirth has stopped: the soul will not transmigrate again, but is forever united with the Liṅga. How can that final beatitude be described? The typically Vīraśaiva answer to that question is that it cannot be described with human words. Therefore, the ultimate goal is indicated with the word 'bayalu' or 'śūnya', which means: Void. This Void should not be understood as 'nothing'; because the word only emphasizes that it is beyond human perception and knowledge. Entering the Void is, therefore, certainly not annihilation of the soul. It is rather reaching one's true identity. The term 'śūnya' reveals Buddhist influence and the concept is, indeed, not very dissimilar from the Buddhist nirvāṇa, which word is also used, although rarely, in Vīraśaiva literature. The great difference is, however, that Vīraśaivism remains theistic: the indescribable Void is finally nothing else than God.

The spiritual path of the six phases is essentially a path of bhakti - devotion. Although knowledge and action are not considered to be useless, it is pre-eminently devotion by which the individual has to reach liberation. This emphasis on devotion enabled the Vīraśaiva movement to attract great masses: it presented a practical religious ideal which could be realized by everybody. Temple cult and pilgrimages were regarded as unnecessary, Sanskrit learning was discarded, and even knowledge of the mythological literature was not encouraged. There was only one thing that mattered: the personal dedication of one's life to God. Everybody could put that into practice with his own emotions and according to his own possibilities; and, as a result, the movement could build up a very multiform community.

Religious Literature

The Vīraśaiva movement was also characterized by a specific kind of literature, suited for its ideals of propagating devotion among the masses. Sanskrit scriptures were, of course, not useful for this purpose: for only the small upper caste of Brāhmaṇas was familiar with that sacred language. For that reason, the Vīraśaiva leaders expressed their thoughts in the vernacular language of the region: Kannaḍa, one of the Dravidian languages. Also the form was adapted to the missionary purpose. The foremost literature of twelfth century Vīraśaivism consists of vacanas: small poems in a free verse form, which could easily be memorized. The production of those poems grew to huge proportions. About ten thousand vacanas have been preserved. We know, for example, 1393 vacanas written by Basava, 1409 by Allama, 1378 by Siddharāma, 1471 by Cannabasava, and 340 by Akka Mahādēvi. These five poets are the most important authors; their poems constitute our main source for the initial period of the Vīraśaiva movement. But there are many more vacanakāras - composers of vacanas. More than two hundred twelfth century vacana poets are known; and, in later times, many authors in the Vīraśaiva community joined this poetical tradition. Vacanas became the Vīraśaiva literature par excellence, although the verse form existed already before Basava. A century earlier, a certain Dēvara Dāsimayya composed devotional vacanas in Kannaḍa. Several themes of the later Vīraśaiva teachings can already be found in his vacanas and, therefore, he is usually regarded as a forerunner of Vīraśaivism. But Dāsimayya did not mobilize the masses, and his devotional poetry was a rather private affair. Basava, however, used the vacana style to build up his spiritual community; and his attractive poetry served as an example for many others.

A vacana is not characterized by strong rules of metre. But it has, nevertheless, its own rhythm because of a deliberate choice of words, in which repetition, parallellism, and wordplay are striking. Many vacanakāras make use of obvious similes from everyday life; although some authors sometimes employ a rather difficult allegorical figurative language as well. There are a number of long vacanas; but most of these poems are rather short and pithy. The poet tries, in a few sentences, to evoke a certain tension which leads to a statement about devotion or liberation at the end. This end of the poem contains a devotional signature: aṅkita or mudrike. It is the name of God, usually in the vocative, as it is typical for the author concerned. Every vacanakāra has his own aṅkita: for example, all poems of Basava end with 'Kūḍalasaṅgamadēva' - the Lord of the Meeting Rivers. On the basis of the aṅkita we can identify the author of the vacana. Modern Vīraśaivas mostly object to the translation of the aṅkita; because they regard it as a sacred proper name. Yet, we give the aṅkitas in English translation throughout this study: for the meaning of the divine name often plays a role in the poet's expression; and that aspect cannot be missed.

The following text is a good example of Basava's vacana poetry.

Kari ghana: aṅkuśa kiṟidennabahude? Bāradayyā.
Giri ghana: vajra kiṟidennabahude? Bāradayyā.
Tamandha ghana: jyōti kiṟidennabahude? Bāradayyā.

Mar̤ahu ghana: nimma neneva mana kir̤idennabahude?
- Bāradayyā, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[6]

The elephant is strong;
but could we say: the goad is weak? No, it is not so!
The mountain is strong;
but could we say: the thunderbolt is weak? No, it is not so!
The darkness is strong;
but could we say: the light is weak? No, it is not so!
Oblivion is strong;
but could we say: the mind that thinks of you is weak?
No, it is not so, *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers*!

Obviously, the vacana centres round the twin concepts of 'strong' and 'weak'. It seems easy to determine what is strong in the world; but Basava wants to emphasize that actual strength might easily be overlooked. Small and unimpressive things could have more strength than what looks impressive and compact. He adduces three examples. The first one is taken from everyday life. The elephant is doubtlessly the strongest animal and it seems that nothing has more power. But, in reality, the elephant is governed completely by means of a seemingly weak instrument: the elephant driver's hook. What then is really strong? The answer must be: the small goad! The second example comes from mythology. The mountains seem to be the most indestructable parts of creation. But the myth tells that the warrior god Indra split the eternal mountains with his weapon: the swift thunderbolt. A third example has a more philosophical orientation: darkness seems to be all-pervading but it cannot resist the feeble rays of light. Then comes the conclusion to which all examples point: human life seems to be dominated by spiritual oblivion; since human souls do not remember their divine origin. But, finally, the human mind can overcome that powerful oblivion, just by directing itself to God. Although the mind's action is only weak, it is able, nevertheless, to meet the God of meeting: the Lord of the Meeting Rivers. Thus, the vacana appears to deal ultimately with the power of true devotion by which man can attain the union with God. The keywords are stressed by repetition: 'ghana', 'kir̤i', and 'bāradayyā' occur four times each. It will be not coincidental that the words for the seemingly strong 'elephant' and 'mountain' (kari, giri) resemble the word for 'weak' (kir̤i). It gives a certain tension to the first two lines and makes the listener ask: Is strong, indeed, strong? The vacana could be most aptly divided into four lines: the fourth line is much longer than the previous three ones so that a strong accent falls upon the conclusion.

Vacanas are classified in Vīraśaiva tradition according to the system of the six phases. Thus, the modern editions of the great vacanakāras present the poems in six chapters (sometimes even in a refined classification of 6 x 6 or even more paragraphs). The classification is sometimes rather arbitrary; but the vacana quoted above fits definitely in the first phase of spiritual development: the theme of the power of devotion amidst oblivion is characteristic of the bhaktasthala.

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[6] BASAVA, 6 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 5; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 54; ARYA, p. 2; BASAWANAL, SRINIVASA IYENGAR, p. 109; MAHESH, OLLIVIER, p. 80; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 267; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 36; ZVELEBIL, p. 6).

The vacanas constitute the literature of early Vīraśaivism. They are the main source of the spiritual and ethical teachings of Basava and his contemporaries. After the initial period, there were also vacanakāras, right up to modern days. But this literary style lost its central place in the Vīraśaiva community. Other kinds of literature came up, more in line with the Hindu environment. In the first place, there was the hagiographical literature. As early as circa 1200, the poet Harihara wrote an ode to Basava: the Basavarājadēvara ragaḷe. Other important books in this genre are: Rāghavāṅka's Siddharāmacāritra (early 13th century); Sōmanātha's Basavapurāṇamu (in Telugu, 13th century); Bhīmakavi's Basavapurāṇa (1369); Cāmarasa's Prabhuliṅgalīle (circa 1430); and Virūpākṣa Paṇḍita's Cannabasavapurāṇa (1584). Especially the Basavapurāṇa and the Cannabasavapurāṇa were considered to be the most authoritative scriptures in later Vīraśaivism. The problem with all these books, however, is that they are heavily influenced by pious phantasy and present the early history of the movement enriched with the most fanciful miracles and mythological speculations. Basava is no longer regarded as an ordinary human being but he is considered to be an incarnation of Śiva's bull Nandi. The social reforms and ethical awakening of the early Vīraśaivas, which are the subject of this study, are only referred to indirectly. But, in a few cases, this literature supplies indispensable additional information to the twelfth century sources.

The second new type of Vīraśaiva literature consists of a number of philosophical treatises in Sanskrit. Naturally, these works were only meant for the elite of the community. Social and ethical topics are almost ignored in such philosophical literature. The most authoritative books in this category are: Śivayōgi's Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi (13th century); Śrīpati Paṇḍita's Śrīkara Bhāṣya (14th century); Māyidēva's Anubhava Sūtra (15th century); and Nandikēśvara's Liṅgadhāraṇacandrikā (17th century?). Only on occasions will it be useful to refer to one of these works here.

The Vīraśaiva revival of the fifteenth century, however, gave rise to a literary production which is very enlightening with respect to our subject. A monumental work from this period is the Śūnyasampādane. The title means 'The Attainment of the Void' and it refers to the spirituality of the Kalyāṇa community. The book claims, in particular, to give an account of the discussions in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' at Kalyāṇa. Actually, the Śūnyasampādane presents a reinterpretation of the classical vacana literature, adapted to the new historical circumstances. It contains a considerable number of original twelfth century vacanas, included in a narrative by the fifteenth century authors. There were four versions of the Śūnyasampādane: the first appeared around 1420; and the last, which will be used here, is Gūḷūra Siddhavīraṇārya's version from the first decade of the sixteenth century. It is especially interesting to investigate how the compilers handled the old tradition of their community by making a deliberate selection of the vacanas and by reinterpreting old texts by means of a new narrative. This is even more relevant because the Śūnyasampādane was regarded as a very authoritative work in Vīraśaiva tradition. Another interesting source from the fifteenth century is the vacana collection of Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara. He played a major role in the reorganization of the itinerant monks of the community. His vacanas mainly consist of philosophical speculation and also focus upon ascetic practice; but, furthermore, they reveal how social questions were treated in the circles of Vīraśaiva monastics in the fifteenth century.

Although he does not actually belong to the fifteenth century, we will sometimes refer to the poems of a certain mendicant whose ideas resemble Basava's in some respects. His real name is not known and, hence, he is commonly called Sarvajña after his devotional signature. He probably lived in the sixteenth century and his literary heritage consists of a great number of small poems consisting of only three lines in a certain metre (tripadi).

Later Vīraśaiva literature is not very relevant for our subject. The zenith of Vīraśaiva writing ended in the sixteenth century and later works never reach the high level of the twelfth and fifteenth century literature. And especially the social ideals of the initial period seem to have been completely forgotten in later times. Only the modern period supplies a few examples of Vīraśaiva authors who try to revive the old reformative zeal of the community and to propagate the heritage of the early vacanakāras. Some monastic leaders may be mentioned in this respect: Śrī Kumārasvāmīji, Śrī Gaṅgādhara, the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Dr Śivamūrti, Māte Mahādēvi, Dr Ja. Cha. Ni., and Svāmi Mahāmane. One of the professors in the University of Mysore, H. Thipperudraswamy, wrote a series of novels about various Vīraśaiva saints. On the whole, however, modern Vīraśaiva writing is not very impressing: it has not yet been able to equal the standard of the best vacana literature of the earliest period.

History of the Movement after Basava

The Kalyāṇa period is without any doubt the most important phase of Vīraśaiva history. It was then that the greater part of the vacana literature was composed; the religious and social ideas of the founders were crystallized and put into practice in the experimental community. After the repression by King Bijjaḷa, the Vīraśaivas were scattered over a large part of Southern India, especially the Kannaḍa and Telugu-speaking countries. At first, it seemed to be a serious setback. But, actually, the Vīraśaivas now had the opportunity to reach a much larger public with their message. After some time, it appeared that they had gained a considerable influence. Many monasteries of the older Śaiva schools, such as the Kālāmukhas, were gradually taken over by the Vīraśaivas. Although the court at Kalyāṇa remained hostile towards the Vīraśaivas, they were welcomed by other rulers and could freely propagate their views in many parts of Southern India.

After Basava had passed away, his nephew Cannabasava became the central personality in the community. He was not only the organizer of the community as the successor of his uncle; the Vīraśaiva tradition also honours him as the successor of Allama on the Śūnya Siṃhāsana

- the Throne of the Void. Originally, the chairmanship of the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' was denoted by this term; but later it became the usual expression for the dignity of the spiritual leader of the community. Cannabasava was the systematist of Vīraśaiva theology: many definitions of spiritual concepts and enumerations of moral codes go back to his vacanas. He did not follow his uncle in his radical social ideals but he adjusted the social structure of the community, to some extent, according to the mainstream of Hindu culture. Thus, the Vīraśaivas became more acceptable to the dominant orthodox sections of the society.

Vīraśaivism secured a firm place in Hindu society. Especially in the thirteenth century, several poets and thinkers contributed to the Vīraśaiva literature. But it was not until the fifteenth century that a revival took place during which a new fervour arose among the Vīraśaivas. It was the time of the Vijayanagara kings who gave considerable patronage to Hinduism: both to the orthodox schools and to dissident movements such as Vīraśaivism. Particularly under the rule of King Prauḍhadēvarāya II (ca. 1426-1446), the Vīraśaiva community became very influential. Two of the king's ministers were Vīraśaivas; and they propagated the philosophy of their community in court circles. One of the Vīraśaiva books of this period, the Prabhuliṅgalīle, was even read before the king and it obtained royal approval. Apparently, Vīraśaivism had become an accepted form of Hinduism in this kingdom. The monasteries which were taken over from older schools, the so-called gurusthalada maṭhas, played a certain role in this process of social acceptance. Vīraśaivism had two categories of monastics: those of the gurusthalada tradition and the viraktas. The former were rather conservative because of their former association with traditional schools. The viraktas constituted the true Vīraśaiva monastic organization, shaped by the ideals of Basava and his contemporaries. In the fifteenth century, the virakta movement acquired new strength because of a drastic reorganization by Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara.

The Vijayanagara kings were not the only rulers who supported the Vīraśaiva community. Vīraśaivism played a major role in the western kingdom of Keḷadi with its capital at Ikkeri (later: Bednur). From 1550 to the end of its existence in 1763, the Keḷadi kingdom had Vīraśaivism as its state religion. Also the southern state of Coorg was a centre of Vīraśaivism: it was the religion of the Caṅgāḷva kings from the middle of the thirteenth century up to 1644; and Northern Coorg was ruled by the so-called Liṅgāyata Rājas from 1610 till 1834. Many minor rulers too gave a privileged position to the Vīraśaiva religion: for example, the rulers of Chitradurga, Pavugada, Sira, and Kittur, to mention only a few. Also the famous Oḍeyar dynasty of Mysore belonged from its beginning in 1399 to the Vīraśaiva community. But it should be noted that the Oḍeyars were Vīraśaiva only during the period that their state comprised a very small territory. After the capture of Shrirangapatna in 1610 and their consequent increase of power, they lost their preference for their ancestral religion. They gradually changed to the Vaiṣṇava tradition; and, in 1685, King Cikkadēvarāja Oḍeyar even started to persecute the Vīraśaivas. New tax measures had evoked a revolt in which the Vīraśaiva priests played a leading role. The king invited all the priests to visit him at a temple; it appeared to be a cruel trap: expert executioners were awaiting the guests and killed about four hundred of them. On the same day, more than seven hundred Vīraśaiva maṭhas (monasteries or vicaries) were destroyed on the orders of the king.[7]

The Vīraśaiva community never regained its former influential position in the Mysore kingdom. During the eighteenth century, Mysore and several adjoining territories came under Muslim rule; and the Vīraśaivas shared in the general decline of Hinduism. In the nineteenth century, when the Hindu dynasty was restored by the British, the Vīraśaivas were not able to play a more prominent role. They remained for a long time a rather uninfluential and divided community; whilst the Brāhmaṇas, although a minority, held a preponderant position. The situation in the northern part of present Karnataka was different. Here, the Vīraśaivas were the largest community: in some districts even comprising not less than forty percent of the Hindu population. Their numerical strength enabled them to maintain their self-awareness and to promote their interests, even in opposition to the well-educated Brāhmaṇa community.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Vīraśaivas, or Liṅgāyatas as they are usually called in this period, tried to raise their status by emphasizing their distinctive features. They stressed their own history and socio-religious system outside the Brāhmaṇa-dominated Hindu culture. They rediscovered the vacana literature of the founding period which had almost fallen into oblivion. And it appeared that the revolutionary ideas of the founders were still able to fascinate the majority of the community. The emphasis on social equality, importance of labour, and education for all, which had once attracted hosts of devotees to Kalyāṇa, inspired again many Liṅgāyatas and even people outside their community. The heritage of Basava and his fellow vacanakāras had not lost its value, nor its attraction.

History of the Study of Vīraśaivism

We owe the first printed account about the Vīraśaivas to a Dutch clergyman: Abraham Rogerius. He was stationed in India from 1632 till 1642, where he not only preached the Gospel but also made a thorough study of Hinduism. His book 'De Open-deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom' ('The Open Door to the Hidden Paganism') was published in 1651. It contains the following description of the Vīraśaivas:

> The second sect of the Bramines [Brāhmaṇas] are called Seivia [Śaiva] or also Aradh-iha [Ārādhya]; they say that a certain Esvvara [Īśvara] is the highest god and that all others stand below him and are inferior: even so VVistnou [Viṣṇu], whom the VVistnouvva [Vaiṣṇava] claim to be the highest god. Those who belong to the race of Soudra [Śūdra]: if they share the conviction of these Bramines, they are

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[7] See the trustworthy account of Mark WILKS, *Historical Sketches of the South of India, in an Attempt to Trace the History of Mysoor*, Vol. I, Mysore, 1930, pp. 214-222. The Mysore court historiographer denies the whole episode, but his argumentation is weak: C. HAYAVADANA RAO, *History of Mysore*, Vol. I, Bangalore, 1943, pp. 462-495.

> called Sjangam [Jaṅgama]. This sect marks their head with three or four lines of ash from burnt cow-dung. Some of them wear round their neck a certain stone, or idol, which they call Lingam; but some of them wear it in the hair of their head. They make their children wear it - coated in wax, with a bit of string round their arm -, when they are eight or ten years old. Those who wear this Lingam do so as a proof and public confession that they put their hopes and trusts completely in Esvvara and that they do not recognize another god than him. The Soudraes [Śūdras] who wear this Lingam refrain from both fish and meat and everything that was ever alive, just as the Bramines.[8]

Another early account about the Vīraśaivas can be found in the travel letters of the Italian aristocrat Pietro della Valle, who called himself 'il Pellegrino' (the Pilgrim). He travelled in Southern India as early as the twenties of the seventeenth century; but his travel reports were published much later, in 1663, more than ten years after his death. He observed some elements of Liṅgāyata culture in Ikkeri, where Vīraśaivism was the state religion. In his reports, he gives a vivid description of the procession of a Vīraśaiva guru; the married Jaṅgamas; and the burial of a Liṅgāyata in a sitting posture.[9]

Later seventeenth and eighteenth century authors, such as Baldaeus, Ziegenbalg, and Paulinus, do not add much to these accounts. Not until the nineteenth century do we find again descriptions of the Vīraśaivas based on one's own investigation. The first author in that period is the Abbé Dubois, who travelled as a missionary through Southern India throughout several decades, starting in 1792. In his famous book on Hindu culture, he gives some interesting information about the Liṅgāyata community. Unfortunately, his Brāhmaṇa informants were not without bias against the Liṅgāyatas; and so his account is not always reliable. Also several Protestant missionaries, notably those from the Basler Mission, contributed to the study of Vīraśaivism. One of them, G. Würth, translated for the first time, albeit in strongly condensed form, the most important hagiographical works. These missionaries also made an active contribution to the study of the Kannaḍa language: especially the most impressive dictionary and the elaborate grammar edited by F. Kittel must be mentioned. Next to the missionaries, there were a number of civil servants of the British colonial administration who provided trustworthy accounts of the culture, the laws and the religion of the various Hindu communities. Of particular importance are the travel reports of Francis Buchanan on Mysore in 1800-'01; the report on caste laws in Poona by Arthur Steele (1826); and the articles by C.P. Brown on the Liṅgāyatas and their holy scriptures (1840). At the end of the nineteenth century, some impressive gazetteers appeared which supplied detailed descriptions of the Liṅgāyata culture: the so-called District Gazetteer of the Bombay

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[8] Abraham ROGERIUS, *De Open-deure tot het Verborgen Heydendom*, 's-Gravenhage, 1915 (first ed. 1651), p. 13.

[9] Pietro della VALLE, *Viaggi di Pietro della Valle il Pellegrino*, Brighton, 1843 (in Italian; first ed. 1663), Vol. 2, pp. 661-668 (English translation: *The Travels of Pietro della Valle in India*, London, 1892, Vol. II, pp. 260-271).

Presidency (1880-1901), and the Mysore Gazetteer by B. Lewis Rice (1897). Historians of religion and Indologists were not yet interested in Vīraśaivism because they were chiefly concerned with the Sanskrit schools; but Wilson and Bhandarkar payed some attention to the Vīraśaiva peculiarities. As a result, the study of Vīraśaivism was mostly confined to the descriptions of ethnographers. They collected valuable material; but hardly any attention was paid to the history and the philosophical background of the community.

On the other hand, the limited historical data which became available were not always rightly interpreted. Around the turn of the century, J.F. Fleet published some interesting inscriptions dating from the twelfth century. However, this scanty epigraphical material lured him into very radical conclusions. He rejected the whole hagiographical tradition about Basava and presented a certain Ēkāntada Rāmayya as the founder of Vīraśaivism.[10] It is the classical mistake: certainly, Ēkāntada Rāmayya was a staunch Śaiva (he is honoured as such in the Basavapurāṇamu); but that simple fact does not make him a Vīraśaiva, let alone the founder of that movement. The rediscovery of the classical vacana literature in the twentieth century revealed beyond doubt that Fleet's assumption was wrong. But, nevertheless, his mistake was repeated by many authors, up till recent times.

In the first half of the twentieth century, ethnographers continued to describe the structure and culture of the Liṅgāyata community. Especially the various 'Castes and Tribes' series supplied valuable information. The earliest of these encyclopedias of castes was the monumental work of Edgar Thurston, assisted by K. Rangachari, about all the castes of the whole of Southern India. R.E. Enthoven gave a similar survey of the castes in Bombay Presidency; and H.V. Nanjundayya and L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer did the same in the Princely State of Mysore. The names of the authors indicate that the role of Europeans was gradually taken over by Indians.

The first Indian to publish a survey of Vīraśaivism was R.C. Artal (1909). He was followed by many others: mostly Liṅgāyatas who were eager to present their own religious tradition. The most valuable studies were the elaborate theses of M.R. Sakhare and S.C. Nandimath, both published in 1942. Nandimath was the first Liṅgāyata to obtain his doctoral degree in Europe: at London University in 1930. However, outside its own community, Vīraśaivism did not generate much understanding. Indologists and philosophers described Vīraśaivism only on the basis of some Sanskrit scriptures and ignored completely the vacana literature. One of them, Surendranath Dasgupta, went even so far as to state that Basava did not speak about the six phases and did not object to caste rules.[11] This is all the more astonishing because the vacana literature had already been rediscovered for some time. That was especially the merit of P.G. Halakatti. He collected thousands of vacana manuscripts and published the texts during the 1920s in a journal and, subsequently, in book form. The several volumes of his Vacanaśāstrasāra really became famous. But, outside the Vīraśaiva community, this revival of the vacana heritage remained unnoticed.

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[10] J.F. FLEET, 'Inscriptions at Ablûr', *EI*, Vol. V, 1898-'99, esp. pp. 239-245; see also J.F. FLEET, 'Inscriptions at Managôḷi', *EI*, Vol. V, 1898-'99, esp. pp. 10-11; J.F. FLEET, 'The Present Position of Indian Historical Research', *IA*, Vol. XXX, 1901, esp. p. 2.

[11] Surendranath DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. V, Cambridge, 1962, pp. 43-44.

In the period after India's Independence, many efforts were made to highlight the vacana literature. The Karnatak University at Dharwar became the centre of vacana studies. The complete works of the foremost vacanakāras were critically edited there: mostly under the supervision of R.C. Hiremath. Also translations into English became available: this was in particular the work of L.M.A. Menezes and S.M. Angadi. An important edition of the Śūnyasampādane, with translation and notes, was published here as well. The renewed interest in the Vīraśaiva literature of the initial period gave a new impetus to the study of the movement, including its social ideals. As early as 1947, the year of Independence, S.M. Hunashal had already typified the Vīraśaiva movement as a social revolution. Several authors followed him in this assessment, which harmonized well with the general trend of post-Independence ideology. Especially sociologists were fascinated by the study of this revolutionary movement, which had already attracted the attention of the father of modern sociology of religion: Max Weber. A good example of this type of Vīraśaivism study is the dissertation of K. Chandrasekhariah, who obtained his doctorate in the country of Weber (Frankfurt am Main, 1955). Later contributions by the social sciences include some interesting village studies in which aspects of the Vīraśaiva way of life are portrayed. Here, we also find a few Western anthropologists who undertook fieldwork in Karnataka: Alan R. Beals and Jackie Assayag. N.J. Bradford wrote a broader thesis about Vīraśaivism on the basis of fieldwork in Dharwar town; whilst Lise F. Vail described Vīraśaiva monasticism as it functions in Gadag. But the majority of sociological and anthropological studies are written by Indians: almost all from Karnataka. Especially the village studies by M.N. Srinivas, K. Ishwaran, C. Parvathamma, and K.G. Gurumurthy are worth mentioning: as well as the studies about Vīraśaiva monasteries by H.M. Sadasivaiah and G.S. Bidarakoppa. Also Leela Mullatti's thesis about the status of women in the community should be mentioned. Arun P. Bali and C.N. Venugopal wrote some sociological articles about the structure and culture of the Liṅgāyata community. Finally, interesting fieldwork reports can be found in the studies related to the Indian Census of 1961.

The philosophy of Vīraśaivism was described by three Liṅgāyata authors: S.S. Bhoosnurmath, H.P. Malledevaru, and V.S. Kambi. Most important for our subject, however, is the historical research which has been undertaken since the sixties. Very valuable is the comprehensive biography of Basava written by P.B. Desai. He was not a Liṅgāyata himself; but he studied extensively the Vīraśaiva literature as well as the epigraphical material: and his judgement is mostly well-balanced. Biographical data on Basava and the other vacanakāras were also collected by some Liṅgāyata scholars: T.S. Shamrao (Śāmarāya), H. Thipperudraswamy, M. Chidananda Murthy, Sarojini Shintri, and M.M. Kalaburgi. Two Indian Christians studied the heritage of Basava and wrote a thesis on the subject: D.I. Hans (alias David Emmanuel), and M.P. Samartha. The latter presented his dissertation to an American seminary. In the U.S.A., the Vīraśaiva teachings were also described in a thesis and several articles by R. Blake Michael.

However, Vīraśaivism became more widely known in the West by translations of its fascinating literature. In particular must be mentioned a small anthology of Vīraśaiva vacana poetry, translated in an exquisite style by an Indian professor in America: A.K. Ramanujan. Another Indian scholar in the U.S.A., V. Narayana Rao, recently edited an impressing translation of the Telugu Basavapurāṇamu. In the Netherlands, K.V. Zvelebil made beautiful translations of a number of Basava's vacanas.

Unfortunately, the study of Vīraśaivism has been divided so far into two camps, both of which are characterized by a certain imbalance. Those who focus on the texts of the Vīraśaiva tradition tend to present the ideals of the community without much attention to the historical developments and present-day practice. On the other hand, the anthropological and sociological studies, although very valuable, often ignore the philosophical and spiritual background of the community and tend to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis of data from a very limited area. Besides, Liṅgāyata authors are not always free from apologetic motives. In the present study, we aim at a combination of literary and sociological analysis: so that both the basic texts of Vīraśaivism and the practice of Vīraśaiva life can be emphasized.

CHAPTER 1

CASTE

The most remarkable aspect of Indian social structure is its caste system. And it was this system and the ideology behind it that was especially attacked by the early Vīraśaiva preachers. They rejected completely the distinction between high-born and low-born groups which had split up the population into strictly separated castes. And they criticized severely the deeply-rooted feelings of superiority among the higher castes. In order to understand the implications of this social criticism, we need to have an idea not only of the theory of caste, but also of the way in which the caste system functioned in medieval Karnataka.

The Theory of Caste: Varṇa

Caste[1] is primarily a structure based on hereditary hierarchy. People belong by birth to a certain caste and normally there is no possibility to enter another caste. Castes are in principle strictly endogamous; consequently the partners in a marriage share the same hierarchical position and there cannot be any uncertainty about the position of their children in the system. The hierarchy derives from a religious notion about the purity of people. The classical Hindu texts make this abundantly clear. Especially in the books about religious law, the Dharmaśāstras, we find elaborate regulations to avoid pollution and to restore ritual purity after defilement. There are many occasions on which people lose their ritual purity to some degree, such as childbirth, contact with a corpse, menstruation and contact with a menstruating woman, and pollution by somebody else's spittle. In addition to these temporary impurities, which can be removed by cleansing rituals, there is also the permanent impurity of people of low birth. So the Manusmṛti, the most influential law book, prescribes purification rules for ritually pure people who are polluted by contact with 'a low-born person (divākīrti), a menstruating woman, an excommunicated person (patita), a woman in childbed, a corpse or one who has touched a corpse'.[2] Apparently, low-born people were considered to be permanently in an impure state and consequently pure people should avoid any contact with such 'untouchables'.

The dichotomy between pure and impure people can already be found in texts from the end of the Vedic period (beginning of the first millennium B.C.). In the Brāhmaṇas we find already the distinction between the pure people who were entitled to perform sacrifices, and the low-born Śūdras who were barred from participation in the sacrificial ceremonies. The former are usually denoted as 'twice-born' (dvija) people, because they were ritually reborn in an initiation ceremony (upanayana). There was no initiation for the Śūdras, who were regarded as people of an inferior status with the duty to serve the twice-born. However, even within the twice-born section we find a dichotomy, for on the one hand there were the lower graded Vaiśyas and on the other hand the higher sections of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. The Vaiśya had the task to provide food and commodities: they were farmers and merchants. The Brāhmaṇas, who had the highest status in the system, were priests and scholars, whilst the Kṣatriyas, lower in status, were rulers and warriors who exercised power. This disjunction of status and power is typical for the Indian tradition. In the threefold division of the twice-born we can recognize the general Indo-European pattern of three social functions (religious, political, economical), as described by Georges Dumézil. These three categories of twice-born represent probably the Aryan invaders, whilst the fourth category of the Śūdras was formed by the autochtonal population of India.

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[1] The following depends mainly on Louis DUMONT's classical study *Homo Hierarchicus*, Chicago/London, 1980.

[2] *Manusmṛti* V:85, cf. Pandurang Vaman KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Poona, 1974, p. 172.

The four categories are called 'varṇa'. This word means originally colour; it is often translated by the word 'caste'. However, it must be stressed that the concept of varṇa is rather theoretical, and the actual practice of the caste system is quite different. It is even questionable whether this system of four varṇas ever existed in practice on a large scale. It is striking to find a certain tension, even in the classical texts, between the varṇa concept and the practice. On the one hand, the texts stress that there are only four varṇas; but, on the other hand, there are allusions to a considerable part of the population that was not part of one of the four varṇas. It seems that, during the first millennium B.C., the Śūdras were somewhat upgraded and below this lowest varṇa a new layer became visible: the untouchables. They had no place in the varṇa system (avarṇa); like the Śūdras they did not belong to the original twice-born group. Actually a fifth layer had emerged which henceforth represented the position of permanent impurity and the function of serving. This theoretical structure of caste can be visualized as follows:

VARṆA	'twice-born'	Brāhmaṇa / Kṣatriya
		Vaiśya
		Śūdra
AVARṆA	'untouchables'	

The Practice of Caste: Jāti

In practice there are not four or five castes, as the varṇa concept suggests. It is even impossible to give a survey of all the castes, for it is not a coherent system functioning over the whole Indian territory. On the contrary, every region has its own caste system with its own divisions and differences in status. Of course the regions are not strictly separated and several caste systems overlap each other, thus providing an almost endless variety of local peculiarities. But the structure of caste has the same characteristics everywhere, stemming from the classical varṇa concept. It is a hierarchical structure on the basis of purity distinctions. Status and power are not combined. Membership of caste is hereditary and usually the castes are endogamous. The castes are interdependent, since they have complementary functions, at least in the religious field. Many castes are characterized by a traditional craft or trade, although generally not all members follow the same profession.

The term to denote such an actually functioning caste is 'jāti'. The literal meaning of the word is birth. By extension, it also indicates the position assigned by birth: and especially the caste into which one is born. In the classical religio-juridical literature, the Dharmaśāstras, the term is interchangeable with the word varṇa, but later on the latter is strictly confined to indicate the fourfold division of the classical tradition; whilst the term jāti is used for the numerous castes that were functioning in practice. It remains unclear how this drastic segmentation of the population could take place on the basis of a theoretical structure that distinguished only four or five layers. The classical explanation, as found in the Dharmaśāstras, is that the many jātis came into existence as the result of sexual relations between people of different varṇa: their children formed a new caste.[3] However, this seems to be a rather theoretical construction which certainly cannot explain the existence of such an impressive number of castes. Probably there have always been more endogamous status groups than the caste theory permitted and there were many reasons that could lead to a further scission of those groups. When part of a group acquired more wealth and power, adopted more rigid rules concerning marriage and purity, was converted to another religious tradition, or took up another occupation, scission could be expected. This movement towards greater fragmentation was much more frequent than the reverse movement of aggregation, although the latter sometimes occurred. As long as two thousand years ago, the Indian population was divided in a large number of jātis and their number only increased.

The caste system is a hierarchical structure, as the classical varṇa theory clearly indicates. But it is not easy to arrange the castes of a certain region into a hierarchical order; since there are many uncertainties about the precise status of several groups. The hierarchical basis, however, can be definitely discerned. On top of the hierarchical structure, we always find a caste of Brāhmaṇas, whilst the bottom of the caste structure is formed by some castes that are considered to be untouchable. Inbetween, there is usually a great variety of castes which are relatively more or less pure. But it is not possible to give these castes a place in the classical varṇa scheme, although the colonial administration as well as many Hindus often tried to do so. Most of the castes would eventually fall somewhere in the Śūdra or avarṇa range. Especially in South India, hardly any caste can claim a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya background. It is not surprising that many castes tend to claim a higher position in the varṇa scheme than others are willing to grant them. We must conclude that the varṇa theory is very important to reveal the ideology of the caste structure, but that it has not much significance with regard to the actual hierarchical position of the jātis.

The caste system is usually depicted as a very static structure which completely excludes social mobility.[4] There are indeed not many possibilities for the individual to rise on the status ladder, but there is frequently a change in the hierarchical position of castes or sections of castes. Although status and power are principally separated in the caste structure, the acquisition of a powerful place in society will have positive effects on the status of a group. There are also many instances of castes or sections of castes which adopt Brāhmaṇa rules of conduct in order to increase their prestige. This process is called sanskritization.[5] Conversion to another religious tradition can have a similar effect, as well as the adoption of a higher ranking trade or occupation. On the other hand, there are castes which are losing part of their status because of lax conduct or intermingling with untouchables. Apparently, hierarchy also has a dynamic aspect that must not be ignored.

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[3] See *Manusmṛti* X.

[4] This tendency is strong in Louis DUMONT's study. He notices hardly any group mobility except in the domain of power, see DUMONT, *Homo Hierarchicus*, pp. 196-200.

Caste in Medieval Karnataka

When Basava and his fellow preachers appeared in the twelfth century, the society was completely under the spell of the caste structure. There is evidence from the inscriptions and from accounts of foreign travellers that a rigid caste system prevailed then in South India.[6] And the territory of present Karnataka was certainly not an exception. Very illustrative is the fact that kings in those regions used to adopt titles such as 'protectors of the varṇa morals' and 'upholders of the duties of all castes'.[7] The superior position of the Brāhmaṇa caste in the hierarchy is amply testified by the epigraphical records. All over the Kannaḍa-speaking country, there were special settlements for Brāhmaṇas who devoted their life to the study and the promulgation of Hindu lore. Those centres of learning, called agrahāras, were often founded with donations by kings who thus confirmed their loyalty to the sacred order with the Brāhmaṇas on top.[8] The bottom of the status pyramid was formed by the large masses of untouchables who were not at all entitled to participate in religious and social life. The repression of the lowest castes is illustrated by the records relating to taxes on the children of untouchables.[9] Apparently there was a certain fear of an unbridled growth of the population in the lowest ranks. On the other hand, the working power of those castes was indispensable for the economy of the country. The working conditions of the lowest castes were harsh and slavery was a rather common phenomenon, especially in the agricultural sector.[10] The middle ranks were divided into many castes, mostly on the basis of their hereditary professions.

The status of those professional castes was not definitely determined and there was a tendency in the Middle Ages to downgrade several castes of craftsmen and traders. A contemporary author includes another five professional castes (carpenters, tailors, goldsmiths, oilmen, ironsmiths, and wine sellers) in the traditional list of seven low-ranked castes (antyaja).[11] The conclusion of one of the prominent historians of Karnataka is, that the society 'was split up into numerous subcastes, sections, coteries and groups, based on the differences of avocations and crafts, religious schools and creeds and also regional diversities. The untouchable class had long come into existence. Free intercourse among the castes and classes was restricted and the rules regarding interdining and intermarrying were rigid.'[12]

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[5] See M.N. SRINIVAS, *Caste in Modern India*, Bombay, 1985, pp. 42-62, and id., *Social Change in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 1-45.

[6] Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, pp. 141-142; P.B. DESAI, Shrinivas H. RITTI, B.R. GOPAL, *A History of Karnataka*, Dharwad, 1981, p. 214.

[7] H.V. SREENIVASA MURTHY, R. RAMAKRISHNAN, *A History of Karnataka*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 125; K.N. CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, Poona, 1979, p. 58.

[8] S. GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, Mysore, 1974, pp. 189-195.

[9] GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, pp. 159-160.

[10] GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, p. 50.

It was in this caste-ridden society that the Vīraśaiva movement came into existence. The preaching of the leaders of the movement, under the charismatic leadership of Basava, is preserved in their little poems, the vacanas. It will become clear from these texts, how the Vīraśaiva leaders protested against the social values of their days and what the inspiration for such a radical criticism was.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Equality of Men

Caste is a frequent subject in the vacana literature of the twelfth century. In various ways, the conviction is expressed that the traditional division of people into hereditary caste groups is untenable. The arrogant attitude of the higher castes is severely criticized and in particular the pretensions of the Brāhmaṇa caste are attacked. No divisions of people are recognized within the Vīraśaiva community; since the common devotion for Śiva transcends all human boundaries. The vacanas give ample testimony to this egalitarian way of thinking. Especially Basava wrote many poems on this topic, in which he clearly expresses his radical ideas on the equality of all people.[13]

One of the most popular vacanas of Basava gives a good impression of the close connection between social values and spirituality, that is so characteristic of his preaching. It is a little poem that departs from a typically Indian question in a situation of everyday life.

Ivanārava, ivanārava, ivanāravanendenisadirayyā;
iva nammava, iva nammava, iva nammavanendenisayyā.
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā,
nimma maneya maganendenisayyā.[14]

O Lord, let them not say:
to whom belongs he, to whom, to whom?
Let them say: he is ours, yes ours, ours!
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
let them say: a son of your house!

The poet refers to the habit of inquiring about the background of a stranger. Everybody must be classified in Indian society and therefore people ask each other 'to whom' a visitor belongs. That may be taken quite literally as 'whose' he is, who his father is. But the question has a broader scope, for it suggests also curiosity about the place of the concerned person in the highly-stratified society. The answer to this question tells them about the status of the person as well: knowing to whom he belongs' implies knowing what kind of contact with him is appropriate. In the poem, Basava expresses the wish that the devotees, the śaraṇas, will recognize him as one of them and he prays to the Lord of the Meeting Rivers, Śiva, that they will accept him as a son of the Lord's house. He does not want to be respected anymore on the basis of his background, his family or caste, but he hopes to be admitted into the new circle of people who share the same spiritual heritage. And thus Basava gives a new orientation to a traditional question: it is no longer a question of birthright, but a question of spiritual brotherhood.

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[11] HĒMĀDRI, quoted by R.N. NANDI, 'Origin of the Vīraśaiva Movement', *IHR*, Vol. 2, 1975, p. 33.

[12] P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, Dharwar, 1968, pp. 118-119.

[13] Some years ago a special edition of Basava's vacanas on caste appeared: C.R. YARAVINTELIMATH [ed, tr], *The Caste Eradication Vacanas of Śrī Basavēśwara*, Dharwad, 1987. The book contains 62 vacanas, but the selection is not exhaustive.

[14] BASAVA, 62 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 22; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 14; IYENGAR, p. 38; KALIDASS, p. 28; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 70; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 50; ZVELEBIL, p. 15).

In another vacana Basava works out the theme of the meaningless traditional divisions in contrast with the only real difference between people which he sees in their attitude towards devotion. His new insights are expressed in a vigorous style that leaves no room whatsoever for doubt: especially in his own heart.

Dēva, dēvā, binnapa, avadhāru:
vipra modalu antyaja kaḍeyāgi
Śivabhaktarādavaranellaranonde embe;
hāruva modalu śvapaca kaḍeyāgi
bhaviyādavaranellaranonde embe;
ī hiṅgendu nambuvudenna manavu.
Ī nuḍida nuḍiyoḷage eḷḷa moneyaṣṭu sandēhavuḷḷaḍe,
haludōr̤e mūga koyi, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[15]

God, O God, mark my prayer:
I shall call all devotees of Śiva equal,
from the Brāhmaṇa at one end
to the lowest-born man at the other end;
I shall call all unbelievers equal,
from the Brāhmaṇa at one end
to the untouchable at the other end;
this is what my heart believes!
In saying this - should I have any doubt,
be it so small as a sesamum bud,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
chop off my nose so that the teeth stick out!

The vacana has the form of a prayer or a solemn oath in which Basava proclaims the belief that there are no differences between people who worship the same Lord. The devotees of Śiva must be regarded as equal, and all traditional separations have faded away. Basava refers explicitly here to caste stratification, when he describes the various devotees in terms of status. They are indicated by the classical order of purity, with the Brāhmaṇa on top and the man of the lowest caste at the bottom. And it is exactly this order which has lost its meaning

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15. BASAVA, 710 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 234-235; IYENGAR, p. 59; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 62; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 46).

among the devotees according to Basava. On account of their devotion they all have become one and the same kind of people. Similarly, the unbelievers, those who do not worship Śiva, must not be classified in terms of caste anymore. Whether they are Brāhmaṇas or untouchables, there is no difference since the real point is that they are worldlings (bhavi). In this way, the traditional division of the people into various castes is completely abolished. Any doubt about the rightness of this radical change must be excluded. Therefore Basava adds a malediction to his promise not to observe caste distinctions anymore. He invokes divine vengeance over himself in case of the smallest possible doubt. The sanction on such a relapse into past values is styled expressively as 'chopping off his nose', the traditional Indian punishment for adulterous women. Apparently, the greatest persuasiveness is needed in order to introduce the new value system in which not caste membership but devotion is the criterion for solidarity of people.

So far the traditional classification of people into castes is rejected, but another division takes its place: devotees versus worldlings. And it seems that this new division is no less strict than the old one. However, there are also a few vacanas in which Basava transcends all divisions and propagates the ideal of the equality of all people. An impressing example is the following poem.

Nelanonde holagēri - Śivālayakke.
Jalavonde śaucācamanakke.
Kulavonde tanna tānar̤idavaṅge.
Phalavonde ṣaḍudaruśana muktige.
Nilavonde, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, nimmanar̤idavaṅge.[16]

There is one earth under the street of the untouchables
and under the temple of Śiva;
one water to use in the latrine and to sip;
one community for those who know themselves;
one result of liberation through the six philosophies;
and there is only one abode for those who know you,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers!

The word 'one' has a central position in this poem. In its emphatic form ('onde' instead of 'ondu') it determines all five sentences. Thus, the poem stresses the essential unity of concepts against all man-made distinctions. The opening line is quite surprising, since it rejects one of the most deeply-rooted distinctions in Indian culture. It is obvious for Indian understanding that one of the greatest contrasts is that between the temple, which is of course ritually pure, and the settlement of the untouchables, which must be avoided because of its pollution from a ritual point of view. The temple is centrally situated, whereas the untouchables have their quarters outside the village or town. But the temple and the untouchables' settlement are both built upon the same earth, and in this image Basava connects both extremes of the purity scale. The common ground is ultimately more important than the superficial distinctions of ritual purity. This conviction is illustrated in a second image. Water can be used in most defiling situations, such as after defecation, but it is the same water that can be used to drink. It is a close parallel with the first line. The untouchables' colony is associated with filth, whilst sipping water is one of the ritual acts usually performed in the temple. The second line expresses the same notion as the first one: the world of the untouchables and the world of the Brāhmaṇas seem to be poles apart, but you have to look at what they have in common. And earth and water are as such neither holy nor impure. Thus, the traditional caste barriers are relativized and the conclusion that caste must be rejected is inexorable. In the third line it is stated that there is only one community for those who have the true knowledge. The word used (kula) can denote everything in which a human being is determined by birth: such as family, sex, and especially caste. This total background of birth has lost all importance according to Basava. For one who has acquired self-knowledge, distinctions between people cannot exist anymore: there is only one community. The background of this conviction is that every form of true knowledge leads to the same goal. This is expressed in the last two lines. The fruit of liberation is only one, however it is attained. Basava refers explicitly here to the six classical systems of philosophy (Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya and Yoga, Pūrvamīmāṃsā and Uttaramīmāṃsā or Vedānta). In his opinion, all philosophical schools provide knowledge that leads to the ultimate liberation (mukti) and the result of that liberation is always the same: the union of the human soul with God. Therefore he concludes that there is only one abode for all people who know the Lord of the Meeting Rivers. Their destination cannot be anything else than the heavenly abode. But the word used for 'abode' has also the connotation of 'position' or 'attitude'. Thus, it indicates that the one final goal of human beings after death also has implications for their life in the world. Since they strive for the same destination, they must have the same attitude in life and they cannot isolate themselves from the others. Although there is also in this vacana a certain distinction between the devotees who know the truth and the others, it has a much more universalistic scope and its final perspective is certainly the equality of all people.

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[16] BASAVA, 878 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 295; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 18; IYENGAR, p. 20; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 66; UMASHANKAR, p. 43; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 57; ZVELEBIL, p. 118). See also BASAVA, 589, 1264.

The other vacanakāras, authors of vacanas, are mostly less radical than Basava. However, there are a few examples of vacanas that express a similar conviction of the human equality. The hesitancy to accept all kinds of people in the flock can be noticed clearly in a vacana by Siddharāma. The author gives the impression that he owes this new insight completely to Basava. Actually, Siddharāma joined the Vīraśaiva movement in his old age after an impressive career in philosophical learning and ascetic accomplishments. He was also famous for his social-welfare activities such as digging wells and tanks, building dams, and supplying water to travellers. However, these charitable efforts did not make him a supporter of the social change which the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa brought about. He was only gradually converted to the social ideals of Vīraśaivism and always remained critical of the egalitarian tendency in the community. His tribute to Basava in his vacanas on this topic is telling.

Svāmi, svāmi, bhaviya bhaktana māḷpudu
yōgyavo ayōgyavo?
Āgamavicāradindāgabahudemba siddhānta:
illi paramaguru Saṅgana Basavayya sarvajātiya
liṅgada rāśi māḍida siddhānta,
Kapilasiddhamallikārjunā.[17]

Sir, is it proper or improper
to convert an unbeliever into a devotee?
We may conclude from an investigation of the Āgamas
that it is allowed.
We may conclude that Basava, the master of the Confluence,
brought all castes here into the fold of the Liṅga,
O Eminent Lord of the Jasmines.

The vacana is typical of Siddharāma's style, which is rather formal and mostly not very poetical. He discusses a well-known problem of the bhakti movements: can everybody be admitted to the flock? Siddharāma tries to answer this question with arguments from the scriptures and the tradition. The scriptural argument comes from an investigation of the Āgama literature. Siddharāma's conclusion is that the Āgamas allow the admission of outsiders to the movement. Indeed, the Āgama tradition attached great value to the initiation ritual that made it possible for people of different background to join a religious order or community. It is unfortunately not possible to determine on which texts Siddharāma based his conclusion; since we do not have the Āgama books in their original form as they were known in his time; most of these books underwent a strong revision in later times, partly under Vīraśaiva influence.[18] So much, however, is clear from Siddharāma's vacana, that the Āgamas in their original form contain texts that can lead to conversion and initiation. It is not stated that initiation is meant for everybody, irrespective of his background and especially of his caste. So Siddharāma needs yet another argument and he finds it in the teachings of Basava and the practice of the community at Kalyāṇa. Then he must conclude that people from all castes (jāti) can be admitted; since Basava encouraged such conversions. On the authority of Basava, the question of the vacana is answered and it is rather plausible to assume that it was Siddharāma's own question. Hesitatingly he has accepted Basava's conviction of the equality of all people.

Another interesting poem on this theme can be found in the works of Akka Mahādēvi, the foremost woman among the vacanakāras.[19] She was chiefly interested in mystical experience, and social views do not come first in her poems, but her spiritual insight has definitely social implications. The following little poem makes this quite clear.

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[17] SIDDHARĀMA, 1321 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 508-509).

[18] This might be the reason why S.C. NANDIMATH attributes purely Vīraśaiva ideas to the Śaivāgamas when he writes that any person, irrespective of caste or sect, could undergo the initiation ritual according to these scriptures. On the other hand, he admits that the Śaivāgamas support the system of castes and stages of life (varṇāśramadharma). See his *Theology of the Śaivāgamas*, Ph.D. thesis, London, 1930, p. 99 and p. 68.

[19] A life sketch of Akka Mahādēvi is given on pages 166-171.

Olume occatavādavaru kulachalavanaṛasuvare?
Maruḷugoṇḍavaru lajjenācikeya ballare?
Cannamallikārjunadēvagolidavaru
lōkābhimānava ballare?[20]

Those who have become equal by love,
should they heed background or pretensions?
Those who have gone mad,
do they know shame or restraint?
Those who are loved by *the Lovely Lord of the Jasmines*,
could they have loyalty to the world?

The poems of Akka breathe quite another atmosphere than those of Siddharāma. Whilst the latter uses a rather formal style, Akka makes poetry of an emotional and even sensual character. Her vacanas stem from a deeply-moving experience of divine love. She regards herself as the wife of Mallikārjuna, a form of Śiva, and she feels a strong passion for her divine lover. So she detaches herself from all bonds that might harm this relationship; such as human love or worldly desire. In the above-quoted vacana, she reveals the social effects of her mystical experience. Divine love has a remarkable result, for it makes people equal. Akka implies here that traditional distinctions are not felt anymore after the experience of divine love. So she can pose her rhetorical question: whether the devotees, made equal by love, should still heed background or pretensions. The word 'background' (kula) includes all those factors of life which are determined by birth; such as family, sex, and in particular caste. These factors and all other circumstances in which men take pride, have been rendered meaningless by the egalitarian power of the divine love. She gives a striking comparison to elucidate what happens: the impact of the love of God on people has the same effect as madness. Just as people who are insane lose their feelings of shame and embarrassment, so devotees do not attend anymore to the rules and values of the world. They are mad with love; and that makes them free from worldly obligations. Akka expresses, in her own ardent style, the typically Vīraśaiva conviction that mystical experience has an impact on social relationships; for, after that experience, there is no longer a place for human distinctions like caste barriers, and people feel that they are equal since they are all united in God's love. This equality of men is experienced within the community of devotees. But, in principle, all human beings are regarded as equal, since the traditional values have lost all meaning.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Levelling Liṅga

Equality amongst people could be experienced in the community of devotees, and in particular one aspect of their culture stressed this egalitarian outlook. The Vīraśaiva devotion was centred round the worship of the sacred symbol of Śiva, the liṅga. The most conspicuous symbol in the Vīraśaiva movement was the personal liṅga (iṣṭaliṅga) which every member wore on his body and worshipped. The texts of the twelfth century often indicate a correlation between the liṅga-cult and the views on caste.

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[20] AKKA, 75 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 9; MAHESH, p. 121; PATIL, p. 30).

In particular, Basava wrote several poems in which the symbolism of the liṅga is related to his egalitarian social views. The effect of liṅga-worship means a drastic change in social circumstances, as is beautifully illustrated by the following vacana.

Bandu ballaha biḍalu holegēri emba hesaroḷave, ayyā?
Liṅgaviddavara mane kailāsavendu nambabēku.
Cāṇḍālaṃ vāṭikāyāṃ vā Śivabhaktasthitō yadi ।
tat śrēṇiḥ Śivalōkasya tad gṛhaṃ Śivamandiraṃ ॥ endudāgi,
lōkada ḍambakara mātu bēḍa,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvaniddudē kailāsa.[21]

Is the name 'street of untouchables' still suitable
when an adept comes to settle there?
You must believe that the house of those who wear the liṅga
is heaven itself!
Therefore this saying:
If in the quarter of pariahs Śiva's devotee resides,
that lane is verily Śiva's world, that dwelling Śiva's shrine.
You must not listen to the hypocritical words of the world;
where *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers* is,
there is heaven!

The poem is again situated in the settlement of the untouchables, but now the whole concept is strongly relativized. The poet imagines that a devotee, or rather one who is experienced in sacred knowledge, comes to the street of the untouchables and takes up residence there. Then something changes in the street, for the sacred man will have brought his personal liṅga with him. The liṅga represents God or is even to be conceived as God. Basava's point is that consequently God is present in the so-called untouchable street and then the concept of untouchability loses its meaning. On the contrary, since Śiva's residence is known as Kailāsa, the street must also be called by that heavenly name. This is a very unconventional conclusion. Therefore, the poet calls on the people explicitly to believe this reversal of values. In order to stress his revolutionary view, Basava switches over to Sanskrit. He repeats his message in the classical form of a Sanskrit verse. Although Basava was very critical of the use of the old sacred language, he uses it here to add a certain authority to his words. It makes a rather ironical impression that a very traditional medium is used to express a most untraditional view. It reveals also Basava's own Brāhmaṇa background and it shows that he was well-versed in the classical language. However, being a Brāhmaṇa, he manifests a great concern for the people who were generally detested by the higher castes. His Sanskrit verse asserts that the so-called untouchables' street becomes a part of heaven because of the presence of a devotee; and an untouchable's house will thus become a temple. He adds a strong admonition not to follow the usual hypocrisies and in the final line he repeats his claim that wherever the Lord is, there is heaven. And the message of the vacana is clear: because of the divine presence in the liṅga even the community of the untouchables can be elevated to the highest level.

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21. BASAVA, 607 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 199-200; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 40).

The liṅga can thus have an upgrading function for the low-born castes. But the reverse is true as well in the opinion of Basava: traditional high positions lose their impact when the liṅga becomes the criterion. Both functions are expressed in a small vacana with a quite interesting metaphor.

Entahavanādaḍēnu, liṅgamuṭṭadavane kīḷujāti.
Kulavahudu tappadu liṅgamuṭṭaloḍane
honnahudu tappadu paruṣa muṭṭaloḍane,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvanolla sarvasandēhigaḷa.[22]

What kind of man he might be,
without the touch of Liṅga he is of inferior caste.
But with the touch of Liṅga he gains a background,
like the touch of the philosopher's stone does change into gold.
The Lord of the Meeting Rivers does not like those
who have all kinds of doubts about this.

The role of the liṅga is characterized here in an expressive way. The mere touch of the personal liṅga brings about a sweeping change in the status of people. On the other hand, without the contact with the personal liṅga there cannot be any status at all. Consequently, people who do not wear the liṅga can invariably be regarded as low-caste. Whatever their traditional birthrights might imply, in the eyes of Basava they are people of inferior status. It should be noted that, in this way, Basava depreciates implicitly his own Brāhmaṇa relatives as well. According to his conviction, there is only one thing that ascribes status; and that is the personal liṅga by which a man or woman is distinguished as a devotee of Śiva. By accepting this symbol, people really obtain a background (kula) and so the liṅga-wearers are considered to be of high caste. Purification by the personal liṅga is described almost as a physical process by comparing it with the philosopher's stone. Just as such a mysterious stone turns everything into gold only by touching it, according to the mythological imagination, so the little stone liṅga changes everybody into high-caste people just by touching the body. Consequently, any doubt about the status of liṅga-wearers is inappropriate; because the liṅga never fails to perform its useful function. And so the last line of the vacana warns the devotees not to show any doubt about this function and about the status of a devotee.

It is clear that Basava attached great value to wearing the personal liṅga. According to him, it changed the status of people considerably and it brought about a new sense of equality among people. The theme of the levelling liṅga is not found on a large scale in the works of the other Vīraśaiva saints of the twelfth century. Only a few vacanas speak in a similar way about the liṅga: for example, the following poem of Siddharāma.

Patreya tindāḍu muktavādudembuda
ballaḍe hēḷirayyā.
Liṅgava pūjisida varṇika liṅgavādanembuda
ballaḍe hēḷirayyā.
Jaṅgamava santṛptibaḍisida bhakta bhavavirahitanāduda

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[22] BASAVA, 142 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 47; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 4). Other vacanas on the same topic: BASAVA, 604, 605, 656.

ballaḍe hēḷirayyā,
ivella caturvidha padakke oḷagu!
Tanna tā tiḷida vīraśaiva bhavakke bandanemba dviruktiyanu
ballaḍe hēḷirayyā,
Kapilasiddhamallikārjuna sākṣiyāgi.[23]
Please tell me if you understand
that a goat who ate bilva leaves is saved.
Please tell me if you understand
that a caste man who worshipped the liṅga merges in the Liṅga.
Please tell me if you understand
that a devotee who gave a jaṅgama a sumptuous meal escapes rebirth
Those of the fourfold rank are still on their way to all this.
Please tell me if you understand then as a parallel
that a Vīraśaiva who knows himself should return to birth,
so may be witness *the Eminent Lord of the Jasmines.*

The vacana tries to elucidate how the ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth can be achieved by true devotion. Three examples are taken from the large collection of popular devotional stories. A goat attained salvation because it nibbled the leaves of a sacred bilva tree.[24] A high-caste Hindu was absorbed in the divinity after he worshipped the liṅga. And a devotee reached the ultimate liberation after he had satisfied a jaṅgama, a Vīraśaiva mendicant, with his gift of a rich meal. The poet adds that the orthodox Hindus have not yet reached that degree of spiritual achievement. He denotes those people with the expression 'the fourfold ones' which is, of course, an allusion to the classical sytem of four caste categories (varṇa). The concept of varṇa is also present in the second example where the devotee who will attain liberation is characterized as 'attached to caste' (varṇika): he is a man of a high caste who is proud on his birthright; and that is, of course, not a compliment in the eyes of the Vīraśaiva authors. Such attachment fades away when he worships the liṅga and thus he is able to reach the highest goal. And if such single devotional acts already render a soul automatically fit to enter the divine world, then the Vīraśaiva with true knowledge need not worry whether he can escape from the cycle of rebirth. Again, worship of the liṅga is portrayed as a means to overcome the bonds of caste. Siddharāma confirms the view that caste disappears wherever the liṅga is present.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Pollution Removed

The basic idea underlying the caste system is a notion about the ritual purity of people. Some people are considered to be pure by birth; whilst others are more or less affected by pollution on account of their origin. The vacana texts of the twelfth century provide interesting views on pollution, often in relation to caste.

An important text is the following vacana of Basava in which he adopts a clear standpoint with regard to pollution while the liṅga has again a deciding function.

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23. SIDDHARĀMA, 1130 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 435).
24. The leaves of the bilva tree (Aegle marmelos Corr.) are used during worship by most sects of Śiva devotees.

Holeyuṇṭe liṅgaviddeḍeyalli?
Kulavuṇṭe jaṅgamaviddeḍeyalli?
Eñjaluṇṭe prasādaviddeḍeyalli?
Apavitrada nuḍiya nuḍiva sūtakave pātaka!
Niṣkaḷaṅka nijaikya trividha nirṇaya
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, nimma śaraṇarigalladilla.[25]

Is there pollution where the Liṅga is?
Is there caste where the jaṅgama is?
Is there garbage where prasāda is?
The uncleanness of speaking dirty language, that is sin!
The triple attainment of the Sinless, united with Reality,
is for nobody than for your devotees,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

Basava's rhetorical question is whether there can be any pollution in a place where the liṅga is. In this way, he expresses his view that the liṅga dispels all ritual impurity. The word for pollution (hole) can denote any kind of ritual uncleanness: as the result of childbirth, menstruation, sanctions after misbehaviour, and, especially, membership of an untouchable caste. The liṅga is so pure that it renders ineffective all those impurities. The second line repeats the argument with respect to the jaṅgama, the religious mendicant. He has given up all attachment of caste, so how can one speak of caste in the presence of the jaṅgama? A third question deals with the purity and impurity of food. In the traditional Hindu society, there were very strict rules regarding food. The most unclean food was anything leftover from another's meal. The morsel that was touched by another's hand or, even worse, had been in contact with his mouth and was thus polluted by his spittle, was absolutely forbidden to eat. That kind of pollution is meant here. According to Basava, such pollution fades away where prasāda, the sacred offering food, is shared. Again, it is the presence of the sacred that dispels the impurity. Does this mean that there is no form of pollution whatsoever that must be feared and avoided? That seems to be the question to which the following line is the answer. Basava warns the devotees for the impurity of speech; for by their words people can be guilty of impurity. This is a striking parallel with the saying of Jesus: 'A man is not defiled by what goes into his mouth, but by what comes out of it'.[26] Basava too shifts the emphasis from ritual consciousness to ethical understanding. In his opinion, moral behaviour can make people suitable for union with God. In this vacana, union is depicted as a triple experience: through the liṅga, through the jaṅgama, and through the prasāda. Three of the 'eight aids' (aṣṭāvaraṇa) are thus presented (because of the theme of purity it is not the usual triad of guru - liṅga - jaṅgama, but the more appropriate set: liṅga - jaṅgama - prasāda). This union is attainable for people who are śaraṇas, accomplished devotees. The way to become such a śaraṇa is mainly a moral way which has nothing to do with the traditional scrupulosity regarding pollution.

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[25] BASAVA, 769 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 256; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 54).

[26] Matthew 15:11. I do not suggest that Basava was influenced by Christianity, as several nineteenth century authors believed. Of course we cannot rule out the possibility of Christian influence, but it is rather unlikely since no traces of Christian presence during the twelfth century have been found in that part of India. However, the fact remains that some of Basava's sayings have remarkable parallels in the Gospels.

In another vacana Basava deals with the same theme, but in a quite different style. Now he is not reasoning carefully as in the vacana quoted above; but he expresses his emotions with poetical exaggeration.

Āvavanādaḍēnu,
Śrīśivaliṅgadēvaru aṅgada mēlē uḷḷavara
bāya tambulava meluvenu;
bīḷuḍeya hodevenu
pādarakṣeya kāydu badukuvenu;
namma Kūḍalasaṅgamadēva aṅgadinda tolagade nenavavara.[27]

What kind of people they might be,
if they wear the holy Śivaliṅga on their bodies,
I shall chew the quid from their mouths,
I shall put on their worn-out clothes,
I shall live by guarding their sandals,
- of those who remember *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers,*
never separating from Him with their bodies.

Basava makes clear that the traditional rules of purity have lost their meaning for him. There remains only one criterion: whether someone wears the personal liṅga. The poet asserts that people who have adopted this holy symbol are free from all kinds of pollution. Consequently, there are no barriers to contact with them. Basava illustrates the unlimited possibilities in social contact with three examples that are not very realistic. He uses a hyperbolic way of expression which stresses the radical change on account of the purifying function of the liṅga. The first example refers to the Indian habit of chewing betel leaves, mostly with pieces of areca nut. When someone had put such a quid in his mouth, it was terribly unclean to any other person. The reason for this utter impurity was that it was saturated with spittle, more than was the case with normal food. So spittle was regarded as highly polluting. Therefore it was unthinkable that someone would take over a quid which had already been chewn by another person: let alone by a person from a lower or even untouchable caste. Basava exclaims that he is willing to go that far in the case of people who are purified by the liṅga round their neck. He goes on to say that he is ready to put on the old clothes of someone who wears the liṅga. Clothes worn out by someone else were likewise considered to be polluting. Finally he states that he is prepared to earn his livelihood by guarding the sandals of other people provided that they were liṅga-wearers. Guarding footwear was, of course, a very humble job with great risks of pollution. It seems that the three examples are decreasing in intensity, because the degree of pollution is obviously the highest in the first situation. But the three situations can also be seen as an ascending series: the case of the quid which had already been chewn might be an occasional event; wearing somebody else's clothes could last over a longer, although limited period of time; and, finally, the choice of one of the lowest

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27. BASAVA, 1058 (cf. YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 59). See also BASAVA, 463.

jobs could determine his whole life. Thus Basava expresses his readiness to subordinate everything to his ideal of communion with all those people who are never separated from God because they wear the liṅga. Outdated concepts of pollution could not obstruct that new communion.

The new view on purity, so radically expressed by Basava, occurs also in a few vacanas of other twelfth century saints. An example from the work of Allama Prabhu should not be overlooked in this context. Allama was the greatest philosopher of the Vīraśaiva movement and most of his vacanas are characterized by complex philosophical reasoning and esoteric allegories. But he was also convinced that the traditional concepts of pollution and caste had to be rejected. He does not seem to have original views on social questions; but he usually follows the reasoning of Basava. The following poem is a good example of his style: he echoes the social views of Basava, but in a more profound philosophical setting.

> Āva jātiyādaḍū āgali purātanara cāritradalli naḍedu,
> guruliṅgajaṅgamakke arthaprāṇābhimānamaṃ koṭṭu,
> ahaṅkāravaḷidihantaha mahātmara
> bāya tambulava meluve, bīḷuḍigeya hodeve!
> Avara pādarakṣegaḷeraḍanū
> maṇḍeya mēle hottukoṇḍu badukuvenayyā.
> Ā gaṇaṅgaḷa dāsana dāsa nānu
> janmajanmadalli āguve kāṇā Guhēśvarā.[28]
>
> In the stories of the ancient saints it went like this:
> from whatever caste they were, they gave then
> their property, life, and desire to the guru, liṅga and jaṅgama.
> Of such noble-minded people who destroyed their egotism
> I shall chew the quid from their mouths,
> I shall put on their worn-out clothes!
> I shall live by carrying their pairs of sandals on my head.
> See, *O Lord of the Caves,*
> I will become in every birth the slave's slave of such saints.

Allama refers to the 'ancient saints' (purātanaru). This is the Vīraśaiva term for the sixty-three Śaiva saints of the Tamil tradition, who are usually called nāyinār (Tamil: nāyaṉmār).[29] Among the ancient saints were many Brāhmaṇas, but some low-born men as well and even a few untouchables. Examples from the hagiographies of the ancient saints were very popular with the vacanakāras of the twelfth century. Allama uses this Tamil tradition here to explain that, in the case of real saints, caste background is not important. He praises the Tamil saints for their unconditional surrender to religion; and he describes their religious lifestyle in typically Vīraśaiva terms: they gave everything to guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama. As is usually the case in his poetry, the structure is carefully chosen. The three key words of Vīraśaiva religion correspond with three kinds of offering. The gift of property has to be made to the guru; the liṅga determines the breath of life; and desire is given

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28. ALLAMA, 905.
29. The hagiographical accounts of these sixty-three saints are found in the Tamil classical work Periyapurāṇam of Cēkkiḻar (ca 1135 A.D.), see K.V. ZVELEBIL, *Tamil Literature*, Leiden/Köln, 1975, pp. 131-135, 178-181.

up for the jaṅgama who is the prototype of an undesirous man. Although the framework of the poem is ingenious, it misses, nevertheless, the idealistic zeal of Basava's model. Allama is certainly not prepared to embrace everybody on the sole condition that he wears the purifying liṅga. He is, like Basava, willing to cross all barriers of pollution, but only in the case of saints. He takes up Basava's illustrative examples - chewing their quid, putting on their old clothes, and living by guarding their footwear which he even may carry on his head -, but it concerns the very exceptional individuals who reach the extreme degree of holiness of the ancient saints. However, Allama too rejects in this vacana basically the concept of pollution which constitutes the foundation of the caste system. Status is also for Allama not a result of high birth but of high spirituality. And even low-caste people could reach that level of spirituality as some of the ancients saints proved.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Open Community

The rejection of pollution made it possible for people from all castes, including untouchables, to join the Vīraśaiva community. There is ample evidence in the vacanas that many low-born men and women were attracted by the teachings of Basava and came to the centre of the devotional movement at Kalyāṇa. Especially Basava stresses in several vacanas that even the lowest people are welcome in the community. In this respect, he often refers to the tradition of the ancient saints who also came from different castes. There is, however, a considerable difference between the old Tamil saints and the Vīraśaiva devotees. The former included a few low-caste people who were equated with the Brāhmaṇas on account of special spiritual qualities, but such upgrading was an exception. The Vīraśaivas, on the other hand, admitted everybody who was prepared to take up the personal liṅga: and thus the Brāhmaṇa norm was rejected. Nevertheless, Basava depicts his own movement as directly following from the tradition of the ancient saints. This is certainly intended to legitimate the revolutionary concept of an open, casteless community. The Tamil saints are included as precursors of the community at Kalyāṇa; and sometimes it is difficult to make out whether someone belongs to the saints of old or to the actual members of the community. Meanwhile, the message of Basava's vacanas is certainly not vague.

Seṭṭiyembene Siriyāḷana?
Maḍivāḷanembene Mācayyana?
Ḍōharanembene Kakkayyana?
Ṁādāranembene Cannayyana?
Ānu hāruvanendaḍe Kūḍalasaṅgayya naguvanayyā.[30]

Shall I call Siriyāḷa a trader?
Shall I call Mācayya a washerman?
Shall I call Kakkayya a tanner?
Shall I call Cannayya an untouchable?
If then I call myself a Brāhmaṇa,
the Lord of the Meeting Rivers
will laugh at me!

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30. BASAVA, 344 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 112; ARYA, p. 44; IYENGAR, p. 20; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 65; UMASHANKAR, pp. 29-30; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 10).

At first sight, this is a very simple poem. The meaning is immediately clear: it is obvious that the poet rejects all distinctions between people on the basis of caste. But some details about the persons who are mentioned will show that behind the simple expressions lies a deliberately chosen structure. The opening sentence refers to one of the ancient saints of the Tamil tradition. Siriyāḷa is told to have had a extraordinary encounter with Śiva.[31] He was a merchant in the town of Kāñci and a staunch devotee of Śiva. One day the god visited him and his wife in order to test their devotion. He came to their house disguised as a begging monk and asked to be feeded with the flesh of their only child, a little boy. The pious couple did not hesitate but killed their son and prepared him as a meal for the visitor. The latter was satisfied with their willingness to serve him, revealed his identity and invited them to follow him to his heavenly land. Siriyāḷa, used to bargaining, tried to increase the reward for his devotion and asked to take the whole town of Kāñci with them to heaven. This is the story to which Basava refers and it suggests a positive answer to his question: indeed, Siriyāḷa was a typical example of a merchant (the poet uses a respectful term for this profession). The second question, however, does not point to an unambiguous answer. Mācayya was one of the best-known members of the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa; and usually he was called in the contemporary vacanas Maḍivāḷa Mācayya or washerman Mācayya, because he belonged to the caste of washermen.[32] Actually, he followed the traditional profession of his caste. His job was, thus, to wash the clothes of Basava and his followers. So there is every reason to call Mācayya a washerman; but, next to the merchant Siriyāḷa, it suggests an order of status which is incompatible with the egalitarian trend of bhakti. For the same reason it becomes difficult to denote Kakkayya, also a respected member of the Kalyāṇa community, by his caste name. He certainly stemmed from an extremely low caste which had tanning as its traditional occupation. But, in the eyes of Basava, he has the same status as the merchant on account of his sincere devotion. Finally, Cannayya is mentioned: a man from the untouchable Mādara caste.[33] The legend about his enduring devotion for Śiva was very popular in the twelfth century Vīraśaiva community. No other saint is mentioned so often by Basava in his vacanas.[34] Mādara Cannayya, as he is usually called, was a stableman at the court of one of the Tamil Cōḷa kings. It is told that he worshipped Śiva in secret for sixty years. The god, impressed by his steadfast devotion, finally visited him and had a simple

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31. Siriyāḷa's story is told in the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* XLIV: *Ciṟuttoṇṭarnāyaṉārpurāṇam*. It is also included in the oldest Vīraśaiva purāṇa: SŌMANĀTHA's *Basavapurāṇamu* IV, in Telugu (trl. pp. 144-147, 152-155).
32. Basava himself calls him in several vacanas Maḍivāḷa Mācayya or even simply Maḍivāḷa, 'the washerman', see BASAVA, 604, 653, 889, 1003, 1262, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1281, 1282, 1283. 1304.
33. An untouchable caste with various occupations such as shoe-making, serving, and sweeping. KITTEL's dictionary takes 'mādara' (referring to Cannayya) as an alternative form of mēdara, basket-weaver; this is definitely wrong since the two terms are clearly distinguished in the vacana literature, see SIDDHARĀMA, 114.
34. See BASAVA, 135, 143, 232, 337, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 432, 475, 600, 604, 649, 682, 716, 731, 740, 741, 744, 749, 794, 1264.

meal of gruel at Cannayya's dwelling. The Cōḷa king worried why his rich offerings were not accepted that day and he was told that Śiva preferred the simple food of the pious outcaste to the royal dishes. It is difficult to determine when this saint lived. Later Vīraśaiva tradition has identified the king in his story as Karikāḷa Cōḷa who lived as early as the second century A.D.[35] On the other hand, there are a number of vacanas which are attributed by tradition to Mādara Cannayya. These poems seem to belong to the devotional culture of twelfth century Vīraśaivism; therefore, some writers tend to believe that he was a contemporary of Basava.[36] An additional problem is that the vacanas which are extant under his name suggest that he was engaged in leather-working. It seems impossible to harmonize the various data about Mādara Cannayya. It is at least certain that Basava knew and appreciated the legend about Cannayya and the Cōḷa king. The most natural conclusion from this is that Cannayya lived before Basava; because it is difficult to imagine that Basava would spread such legendary stories about his followers during their lifetime. It is also rather unlikely that a Tamil stableman would be the same person as a leather-worker making poetry in Kannaḍa. Moreover, there are some vacanas in Basava's work which link Cannayya with the Tamil ancient saints.[37] The vacanas which have come down to us under the name of Mādara Cannayya were most probably written by a contemporary of Basava: likely one who had assumed the name of the famous Tamil saint. The latter, whose historical background cannot be definitely determined, is mentioned in Basava's vacana quoted above. Two contemporaries of Basava, Mācayya and Kakkayya, are thus enclosed by two legendary persons, Siriyāḷa and Cannayya. All four examples stress Basava's conviction that one should avoid characterizing people by their caste background. Although there is every reason to call Mācayya a washerman and Kakkayya a tanner, it must never be said with the intention of emphasizing one's own higher status. This is the moral teaching of the vacana; and Basava expresses it in a convincing way by including himself: if he regards other people as untouchables and calls himself a Brāhmaṇa, God will laugh at him!

In his enthusiasm for a casteless community, Basava is prepared to go very far. Even castes that are generally regarded as very unclean may be admitted to the community of śaraṇas. His vacanas on this subject can be rather shocking by Indian standards, as the next poem will show.

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35. VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa* LV; see also MENEZES and ANGADI in their notes to the *Vacanas of Basavaṇṇa*, pp. 454-455.
36. P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, Dharwar, 1968, pp. 191, 329; Gangadhar P. GANJIGATTI, *Veerashaiva Movement in Karnatak*, Davanagere/Dharwar, 1968, p. 23; C.R. YARAVINTELIMATH, *The Caste Eradication Vacanas of Śrī Basavēśwara*, Dharwad, 1987, p. 70.
37. BASAVA, 337: mentions Cannayya together with Cērama, one of the sixty-three nāyinārs. BASAVA, 347: associates Mādara Cannayya with the tradition of the ancient saints. T.S. ŚAMARĀYA tries to combine the various elements and suggests that Cannayya was born in a Kannaḍa-speaking district of the Cōḷa kingdom and that he practised leather-working temporarily, see his *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, Mysore, 1967, p. 333. This is not convincing.

Eḍada kaiyali katti, balada kaiyali māṃsa,
bāyalli sureya gaḍige, koraḷalli dēvarirali,
avara liṅgavembe, saṅganembe,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, avara mukhaliṅgigaḷembe![38]

In their left hand a knife, in their right hand meat,
and at their mouth a jar of liquor,
but let the god be round their neck,
then I shall call them Liṅga,
I shall call them the Community,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
I shall call them the Liṅga's faces.

Obviously, very low-caste people are portrayed in this vacana. In three images Basava indicates the utter unclean culture of the lowest layer in the social stratification. These people have a knife in their hand; and that points to their habit of slaughtering. Killing animals was absolutely forbidden for the higher castes: in particular for the Brāhmaṇas; but the lowest castes were often engaged in fishing, hunting and slaughtering. And the people in this poem also eat the meat of the killed animals unashamedly; as the second image indicates: they have the meat in their right hand (the hand used for eating). Finally, they are drinking liquor; and that is doubtlessly the most terrible habit in the eyes of the ritually pure people. However, this utter pollution is no barrier to accepting them as members of the devotional community. When such people tie the liṅga around their neck, they will be welcome in the Vīraśaiva movement. Basava states explicitly that they can be devotees like the others, when he says that he shall call them Liṅga, presence of God. This group of low-caste converts may also be indicated with the word 'Community' (saṅgha); because they share in the fellowship of Śiva on account of their choice of the liṅga. So people from the lowest castes, characterized by extreme ritual uncleanness, can be admitted into the Vīraśaiva community. In the eyes of Basava, they are not less than the faces of the Liṅga: representatives of God. However, it is not Basava's intention to legitimate all kinds of dubious morality and violent behaviour. He expresses his willingness to accept people from every caste, even from those that have very impure habits. But he certainly expects them to change their life; because in other texts, he often admonishes his followers to shed their bad habits. The vacana quoted above has its parallel in another text about meat-eating and liquor-drinking people which reflects a stricter attitude:

Aṅgadicchege madya māṃsava timbaru;
kaṅgaḷicchege paravadhuva nerevaru;
liṅgalāñchanadhāriyādalli phalavēnu
liṅgapathava tappi naḍevaru? .....[39]

For the satisfaction of their body they swallow liquor and meat,
for the satisfaction of their eye they make love with another's wife,

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38. BASAVA, 719 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 237; IYENGAR, p. 60). It is remarkable that this verse is included in hardly any of the anthologies. Even YARAVINTELIMATH omitted it in his collection of *The Caste Eradication Vacanas of Śrī Basavēśwara*.
39. BASAVA, 106 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 35; IYENGAR, p. 33; KALIDASS, p. 24; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 44).

- what is the effect of wearing the symbol of liṅga
for those who depart from the path of liṅga? .....

Obviously Basava will not tolerate that the purifying symbol of liṅga gives people an excuse to be guilty of impure behaviour. Wearing the personal liṅga must go together with following the path of liṅga. Of course, a non-vegetarian diet and the consumption of alcohol are not considered to be in accordance with the path of liṅga. Therefore, conversion to Vīraśaivism meant for the lowest castes a considerable change of lifestyle. But at least they were welcome in the Vīraśaiva community, regardless of their ritually impure background.

The texts of the other great saints of the twelfth century do not deal frequently with the theme of the possible conversion of low-caste people. The vacana literature gives the impression that it was Basava's own conviction in particular, which was only partly shared by his fellow vacanakāras. They seem to have felt more a tension between the policy of an open community and the expectations relating to ritually pure behaviour. It becomes clear from their vacanas that they do not fully agree with Basava in his positive approach to the untouchable castes. On the other hand, they share his enthusiasm for those low-born devotees who have reached a high level of spirituality: both saints from the past and contemporaries. We can find a good example of this attitude in the vacanas of Cannabasava. He, the nephew of Basava, played a vital role in the consolidation of the Vīraśaiva movement. He was the systematist who worked out the principles of the śaraṇas into a coherent philosophical structure. His vacanas are on the whole not very lyrical; but he does try to arrange philosophical and historical data in an order that could be easily memorized. The didactic character of the poems is evident from the many repetitions and his emphasis upon strict moral behaviour. Cannabasava regards it as his duty to safeguard the purity of the Vīraśaiva community; so he warns repeatedly against all kinds of vices. In particular the bad habits of the lower castes are severly attacked in his vacanas. Obviously, many converts from the lower strata had not completely abandoned the impure culture of their former communities. Several verses of Cannabasava reflect an outright fear for the pollution thus brought into the Vīraśaiva community.

In a long text about the dangers of impure customs, Cannabasava even exclaims:

.....
Katte bhaktanādaḍe kisukuḷa timbuda māṇbude?
Bekku bhaktanādaḍe iligaḷa timbuda māṇbude?
Handi bhaktanādaḍe haḍikeya timbuda māṇbude?
Soṇaga bhaktanādaḍe haḷeya māṃsava timbuda māṇbude?[40]
.....

.....
If a donkey becomes a devotee, could it stop eating dirt?
If a cat becomes a devotee, could it stop eating rats?

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[40] CANNABASAVA, 134.

If a pig becomes a devotee, could it stop eating filth?
If a dog becomes a devotee, could it stop eating tainted meat?
.....

With these four examples the poet tries to demonstrate how difficult it is for people to change their cultural habits. A long series of impure customs is enumerated: including hunting, gambling, dicing, drinking liquor, eating meat, and using cannabis. Most of the criticized habits belong to the culture of the lower castes in particular. Apparently, Cannabasava was not very positive about the capability of moral improvement among the people in these castes, even if they had been converted to Vīraśaivism. His examples suggest that he regarded the bad customs of the lower castes as innate, almost instinctive traits. Just as a cat is inclined by nature to hunt rats, so people in the untouchable sections of society cling to bad habits and impure food. This fits in very well with the general Hindu theory of karma which explains the differences between people and their cultural circumstances as the results of different amounts of merit or demerit deserved in a former existence. If the untouchables are thus doing penance for sins committed in their former lives, their subhuman circumstances are, of course, inescapable. The automatism of the karma theory does not leave much room for social mobility by way of conversion. Nevertheless, Cannabasava does not seem to regard the uplift of the untouchables as impossible; because he tries in his vacanas to convince the converts of the necessity of abandoning their impure customs. But this text shows that he considers that to be an extremely difficult task; because it is in his view almost against nature.

Therefore, it is not surprising that we find in his vacanas for the first time the rule which would make the admittance of low-caste people into the Vīraśaiva community very difficult, if not impossible.

Śrīguruvādātanu sakalāgamaṅgaḷa hṛdayavanar̤idu,
tanna tānar̤idu sarvācāra tannalli nelegoṇḍu,
upadēśava māḍuva kramaventendaḍe:
brāhmaṇana mūr̤u varuṣa nōḍabēku;
kṣatriyana ār̤u varuṣa nōḍabēku;
vaiśyana ombhattu varuṣa nōḍabēku;
śūdrana hanneraḍu varuṣa nōḍabēku;
nōḍidallade dīkṣeya koḍalāgadu.
Vīrāgamē:
Brāhmaṇaṃ trīṇi varṣāṇi ṣaḍabdaṃ kṣatriyaṃ tathā ।
vaiśyaṃ navābdamākhyātaṃ śūdraṃ dvādaśavarṣakaṃ ॥
Ī kramavanar̤iyade upādhiviḍidu upadēśava māḍuvāta guruvalla.
Upādhiviḍidu upadēśava māḍisikombāta śiṣyanalla.
Ivaribbara nilavu onde: ṭhakkana manege ṭhakka biddina bandante!
Ī guruśiṣyaribbaranu rauravanarakadallikkuva Kūḍalacanna-saṅgamadēva.[41]

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[41] CANNABASAVA, 633 (Cf. H.M. SADASIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study about Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, Mysore, 1967, pp. 168-169).

If it is asked how the rule is, when he who has become a guru
- knowing his heart, being full of bliss, knowing himself,
all good conduct firmly rooted in him -
will perform an initiation:
a Brāhmaṇa should be observed for three years,
a Kṣatriya should be observed for six years,
a Vaiśya should be observed for nine years,
and a Śūdra should be observed for twelve years;
without such observation one should not receive initiation.
The Vīrāgama states:
Such it is declared: a Brāhmaṇa three years, a Kṣatriya six years,
a Vaiśya nine years, and a Śūdra twelve years.
He who intiates deceptively without enforcing this rule, is no guru.
He who is deceptively receiving initiation, is no disciple.
Both are in the same position:
it is like a bandit coming as a guest to a bandit's house!
The *Lord of the Lovely Confluence* will throw
such guru and disciple both into the terrible hell.

This text marks the transition from the early revolutionary idealism of Vīraśaivism to the period of consolidation, in which traditional values were taken up again. Cannabasava introduces here a rule from the Āgamas which imposes limitations on conversion. People can only be admitted and initiated after a period of probation of which the length is dependent on the candidate's caste status. The rule makes it very difficult for low-caste people to be initiated. Śūdras have to wait for as much as twelve years; and conversion of untouchables seems even to be out of the question. Obviously, the practice of probation was not accepted readily, for the author has to threaten the disobeyers with severe punishments. If the period of observation should be omitted, no real initiation can take place: the guru is not a real guru and the disciple not a true disciple. Both are pretending, like bandits who are playing the role of respectable citizens. And a terrific hell is presented as the place where they belong. It seems that both gurus and disciples had to be convinced with severe words. That is quite understandable because this precept means a drastic change in the Vīraśaiva attitude towards caste. In the period after Basava, when Cannabasava has taken over the leadership, caste has returned as an argument and the open community is gradually closed.

Although Cannabasava is very critical of conversion of low-caste people, he shares the general appreciation about those saints in the Kalyāṇa community who came from a low-caste background. Cannabasava, too, sings their praises in several vacanas. The following is a typical example.

Hanneraḍu gāvuda vistīrṇada mahāpaṭṭaṇakke Kalyāṇavemba praṇati.

Ā praṇatiyalli mahattemba eṇṇeyaner̤edu,
jñānavemba jyōtiya hottisi opputidditayyā.
Alli Kāḷayya, Cauḍayya, Kōla Śāntayya,
Mogavāḍada Kēśirājayya, Khaṇḍeya Bommaṇṇa,
Miṇḍa Mallinātha, Haḍapadappaṇṇa, Maḍivāḷa Mācayya,
Akka Nāgāyigaḷu sahita ivarellaru
Saṅganabasavaṇṇana bayala kūḍidaru.

Idu kāraṇa, Kūḍalacannasaṅgayyanalli
ivarellara prasādada bayalu enagāyittu.[42]

Kalyāṇa, the big city extending twelve miles, was like a lamp.
In that lamp the oil of intellect was poured,
and when the flame of knowledge was lighted, it was radiant.
There they all came together:
Kāḷayya, Cauḍayya, Kōla Śāntayya,
Kēśirājayya of Mogavāḍa, Bommaṇṇa with the sword,
Miṇḍa Mallinātha, Appaṇṇa the barber, Mācayya the washerman,
and Akkanāgāyi,
all united in the experience of Basava, the master of the Confluence.
Therefore, in the *Lord of the Lovely Confluence,*
the experience came to me as a gift from all of them.

The poem gives a good impression of the central position that the town of Kalyāṇa had in the saint's perception. The town has been sprawling to mythical dimensions; and because of the light of Vīraśaivism it becomes the centre of the world for the devotees. Cannabasava mentions several famous devotees who had made the journey to this city of enlightenment and joined the Vīraśaiva community. He expresses his gratitude towards those devotees to whom he owes his own spiritual experience. It is remarkable that, in his enumeration of saints, high-born and low-born people are mentioned indiscriminately. The last person mentioned is Akkanāgamma, or Akkanāgāyi, who was Cannabasava's mother and the sister of Basava. She was of Brāhmaṇa origin, but here her name is preceded by the names of three definitely low-caste devotees. Washermen and barbers formed traditionally untouchable castes; and Mallinātha is indicated as a miṇḍa, a libertine, because of his licentious way of life. The first five devotees cannot be identified with absolute certainty; but they seem to be from varying caste backgrounds as well. The swordsman Bommaṇṇa could well be the low-caste hunter who is usually called Telugu Bommayya. Kēśirāja might be a nobleman, one of the ministers of king Bijjaḷa, for there is a Vīraśaiva legend about the minister Kēśirāja and the hunter Bommayya. Kōla Śāntayya was most probably one of king Bijjaḷa's palace guards, a rather low-caste occupation. Cauḍayya could be Ambigara Cauḍayya, the ferryman, or Bahurūpi Cauḍayya, the actor; in both cases he was a low-caste man. Kāḷayya cannot be identified at all.[43] Although the identification is not complete, it is evident that Cannabasava depicts Kalyāṇa as a town to which Basava, with his spiritual experience, attracted saints from every background. The low-caste people among them are fully integrated into the spiritual community.

Intermezzo - Two Low-Caste Śaraṇas

In order to get a better understanding of the Kalyāṇa community, we shall portray two of the low-caste śaraṇas and their contributions to the Vīraśaiva movement.

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[42] CANNABASAVA, 1455 (cf. R.C. HIREMATH, *Sri Channabasavesvara*, Dharwar, 1978, p. 28). This vacana was assigned a prominent place in the fifteenth century collection *Śūnyasaṃpādane* where it is the final text: XXI:79.

[43] For the biographical data and legends of the devotees, see ŚAMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*.

Ambigara Cauḍayya[44] was a remarkable personality among the śaraṇas of the Kalyāṇa community. His caste, Ambiga or Kabbēra, does not belong to the lowest strata of untouchable groups; but it is certainly not a caste of the pure category of 'twice-born' Hindus. The Ambigas were traditionally fishermen and ferrymen; and Cauḍayya is said to have followed the latter profession. There are hardly any biographical data about Ambigara Cauḍayya; but we do know that he came to Kalyāṇa and joined the Vīraśaiva movement. There are some references to him in the vacana literature; as is probably the case in the above quoted text of Cannabasava. To this very day, there is still a cave in Kalyāṇa which is said to have been his dwelling.[45]

Cauḍayya's vacanas show us that he was both a mystic and a prophet. He composed attractive devotional poetry in which his mystical experience of the divine grace is expressed. But there are also several texts of Cauḍayya that condemn in a severe way the outward piety and the social evils of his time. His poems have a typical character of their own and we are often reminded that the author is a boatman. The language is rather coarse, especially when he attacks vested interests. His expression of devotion is, likewise, the product of a boatman. It is fascinating to see how he uses images from his daily labour in his vacanas. For example: he describes the divine grace as a wind which one must take advantage of when it lashes. And in the following vacana God is even depicted as a ferryman!

Taḍi neleyillada mahānadiyalli
oḍalillada ambiga bandiddēne.
Hiḍiva biḍuva manava belegoṭṭare,
kaḍegaṇisi hāyisuve mahāhoḷeya.
Nuḍiyillada nissīma grāmadallirisuvenendātanambiga
Cauḍayya.[46]

I, the bodiless ferryman,
have come to the great river
that has neither shore nor bottom.
If you give your unstable mind as fare,
I shall take you across the great stream
and I shall place you in the settlement
beyond all words and bounds,
thus speaks Cauḍayya of the ferrymen.

The poet depicts God as the divine Ferryman (ambiga) who is transporting people over the river that separates temporal existence from

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44. See about him: S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, p. 111; T.S. ŚAMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, Mysore, 1967, p. 18; Rowena HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, Mysore, 1983, p. 115.
45. P.B. DESAI, 'Historical Places pertaining to Basavēśvara', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, Bangalore, 1967, p. 481; P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, Dharwar, 1968, p. 358.
46. AMBIGARA CAUḌAYYA, in: P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, 1241 (also in: PRABHUŚANKARA [ed], *Śaraṇara nūrondu vacanagaḷu*, 81; cf. HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 83; H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968, p. 141).

eternity. This river cannot be crossed by an ordinary human ferryman; because it is unfathomable and it has no bank where one could moor. But that is no problem for the bodiless, superhuman Ferryman who is able to cross the greatest stream. He invites people to let him take them over and thus reach the final destination: a settlement that cannot be described nor delimited. The fare is giving up the activity of the human mind that is not able to grasp the ultimate reality, but always takes and leaves at the same time. It is remarkable that Cauḍayya does not use an invocation of the deity as his devotional signature (mudrike) but his own name. This unconventional feature clearly underlines the independent attitude of the ferryman.

His poems on social topics are also characterized by his life on the riverside. He compares the bathing Brāhmaṇas, with their clean shaven heads, to buffaloes suffering from skin diseases which plunge into the river for relief. And he praises the untouchable castes because they provide people with such useful articles as boats and ropes. His texts express a critical attitude towards the values of the settled sections of the population. The ferryman looks from a distance at them and wonders about their endless worries about food, clothing, and prosperity. He does not belong to their community and he is not involved in their struggle for status. Therefore, he can allow himself to attack in an uncompromising way their sacred institutions such as caste. The pretensions of the high-caste people are ridiculous in his eyes; and he is convinced that the untouchables are dearer to God.

Bēḍaṅge jēḍaṅge ḍōharaṅge holeyaṅge rūḍhigīśvaranolida
pariya nōḍā!
Lōkada mānavaru̧ māḍuvaṛu samayaṅgaḷaṃ.
Māḍalikke avarēnu svatantrare?
Ivaroḍḍida ṭhāvinalli kallu muḷlu mūḍuvavendāta
namma ambigara Cauḍayyanu.[47]

See the way in which
a hunter, a weaver, a tanner and other untouchables
have pleased the highest Lord.
Worldly people form distinct groups,
but are they doing so voluntarily?
Our Cauḍayya of the ferrymen says:
on the place where they are placed, stones and thorns become
visible.

The vacana aims at a reversal of values. Whilst the untouchables are normally looked upon with contempt, Cauḍayya depicts them as the people who reveal a real devotion to God. On the other hand, the exclusive communities of the distinguished twice-born are severely criticized. In the first line, Cauḍayya refers to the classical stories of the Śaivas about low-caste devotees who pleased Śiva. People from several low or even untouchable castes occur in these stories. The man from the hunting caste (Bēḍa) is probably Kaṇṇappa, one of the sixty-three ancient saints.[48] It is told that he served Śiva the roasted meat of wild boars and other animals that he had shot. According to the legend, he offered his own eyes when the eyes of a Śiva-image were bleeding. The weaver is certainly Dēvara (or: Jēḍara) Dāsimayya, the eleventh century forerunner of Basava. There is a legend about him which is often referred to in the Vīraśaiva literature.[49] He is said to have worked twelve years in order to produce a very exclusive, priceless piece of cloth. He gave it away to a wandering monk who was actually Śiva in disguise. Dāsimayya remained unmoved and filled with devotion when the monk tore it up before his eyes. The tanner (ḍōhara), to whom Cauḍayya refers, is most probably the famous Vīraśaiva saint Ḍōhara Kakkayya, who was also very popular with the Vīraśaiva authors.[50] His heroic deed is, according to the hagiographers, that he stabbed a Brāhmaṇa who dared to glorify Viṣṇu as the greatest god. Finally, the untouchable (holeya) in the ferryman's vacana could be linked to several stories about devotees from the lowest strata who were accepted by Śiva for their sincere devotion. With these examples, Cauḍayya wants to make clear that low birth is not a barrier to the attainment of the highest degree of sanctity. On the other hand, the pure castes are depicted in the vacana as most unlucky and unfruitful groups of people. They claim to unite themselves out of free will in pure communities, but actually they are forced to do so by the caste system and they are doomed by their karma to live amidst thorns and stones: no fruit can come out of their isolated circles.

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[47] AMBIGARA CAUḌAYYA, in: P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, 1595.

Obviously, Cauḍayya is little inclined to spare the elite of the society. His poetry is not very sophisticated and many high-caste contemporaries would have been shocked by his sharp criticism. His arguments are often rather similar to those of Basava, by whom he must have been strongly influenced. However, he is more radical in his utterances than the great leader of Vīraśaivism and his wording is unpolished. Nevertheless, he was considerably appreciated by the Vīraśaiva community because of his independent attitude. Later tradition even regarded Ambigara Cauḍayya as a divine incarnation. It is touching to discover that the ferryman's mother is said to have been Gaṅgā, the holy river.

[48] His story is told in the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* XVIII: *Kaṇṇappanāyaṉārpurāṇam* and in SŌMANĀTHA's *Basavapurāṇamu* III (trl. pp. 111-120). See also BASAVA, 65.

[49] See e.g. BASAVA, 147, 319, 320, 432, 434, 443, 680, 739; BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* L.

[50] See e.g. BASAVA, 342, 343, 344, 345, 348, 349, 350, 352, 475, 587, 649, 744; SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* VII (trl. pp. 242-243); VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa* LVII. Cf. ŚAMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, pp. 57-58.

Another important devotee who came from the lower strata of the society was the shoemaker Haraḷayya.[51] Unlike Cauḍayya, his fame is not based on his vacanas; because there are no texts preserved that were written by him. Nevertheless, he played a major role in the history of Vīraśaivism. Haraḷayya was certainly one of the most low-caste devotees; because shoemakers invariably belonged to a definitely untouchable caste. The reason for this was that they used for their products the skins of dead animals, which was regarded as utterly defiling. The stories about Haraḷayya show that even this most unclean trade could be used to express devotion.

Information about Haraḷayya's life is almost completely restricted to later hagiographical accounts. An exact report of the course of events in twelfth century Kalyāṇa is not available and it is not possible to reconstruct it for certain. Although later tradition is characterized by pious phantasy, it nevertheless tells something about the impact of a certain episode in the past. Therefore, we shall first relate the story about Haraḷayya as it is found in the later Vīraśaiva scriptures like Śaraṇalīlāmṛta (about 1750).[52] Then we shall try to determine which elements of the hagiographical account could have historical value.

It is told that Haraḷayya lived with his wife Kalyāṇamma in the untouchables' settlement of Kalyāṇa town, where he followed the trade of shoemaking. Once he met Basava on the street and greeted him politely with the formal salutation 'śaraṇu' ('you are my refuge'). Basava replied to his greeting by saying 'śaraṇu śaraṇārthi' ('really, you are my refuge'). The untouchable shoemaker was struck dumb with surprise that he was treated so courteously by the treasurer of the king. When he came home, however, he regretted that he had not answered to Basava's greeting. He told his wife that he had committed a terrible sin, since Basava had answered his single greeting with a double salutation and he had not showed his gratitude for this great act of humility. Haraḷayya and his wife decided thereupon to prepare a special gift for Basava. They cut each a piece of skin from their thighs, tanned it and made from it a beautiful pair of shoes. Haraḷayya called upon Basava in order to present him with the shoes; but Basava refused to accept the gift because he did not regard himself worthy enough of such an honour. On his way back to home, Haraḷayya met a certain Brāhmaṇa

[51] See about him: ŚAMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, p. 522; M. CHIDANANDA MURTHY, *Basavanna*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 89; DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, pp. 97, 195-196, 226, 237-238, 275; Gangadhar P. GANJIGATTI, *Veerashaiva Movement in Karnatak*, Davanagere/Dharwar, 1968, pp. 5-9; HARDEKAR Manjappa, *Basava: The Dimension of Universal Man*, Dharwar, 1966, pp. 67-73; R.C. HIREMATH, 'Śrī Basavēśvara: A Biography', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, pp. 28-29; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, pp. 75-79; H. THIPPERUDRASWAMY, *Basaveshwara*, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 9-10; BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* LX; *Śūnyasampādane* XXI:18; VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa* LXII. The female jagadguru Māte Mahādēvi has written a novel about Haraḷayya: *Revolution in Kalyāṇa*, Dharwar, 1973.

[52] See especially HARDEKAR, *Basava: The Dimension of Universal Man*, pp. 69-73.

named Madhuvayya (or Madhuvarasa). Like Basava, he was a minister at the court of king Bijjaḷa. Madhuvayya saw the beautiful shoes and wanted to buy them. When the shoemaker refused, the shoes were snatched from him by the servants of the Brāhmaṇa. Madhuvayya, however, did not enjoy his new acquisition for very long; because when he put on the shoes, he was immediately smitten by leprosy. His illness became unbearable after some time, but fortunately he had a maidservant who was a pious Vīraśaiva devotee. She went to Haraḷayya and fetched water for her master's bath from the shoemaker's tank. When Madhuvayya bathed in this water, he was cured at once. This convinced him of the truth of Vīraśaivism and he underwent the liṅga-initiation. Moreover, he offered to give his daughter in marriage to the son of Haraḷayya in order to bring about a reconciliation. Such a marriage of a Brāhmaṇa girl with an untouchable boy was strictly forbidden in religious law. It was considered to be 'pratilōma' which means literally 'stroking against the hair'. An 'anulōma' relation between a high-caste man and a low-caste woman was forgivable; but a 'pratilōma' relation was regarded as contrary to the natural order and therefore impermissible. Consequently, the reaction to this marriage was very strong. Both fathers were arrested and condemned to death by king Bijjaḷa: according to some sources together with the bridegroom. They were blinded and then executed in the 'eḷahūṭe' form: they were chained to the leg of an elephant and then dragged to death along the streets of the town. This incident marked the end of the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa. The Vīraśaivas fell victim to a large-scale persecution. On the other hand, king Bijjaḷa was heading for disaster too. Before his execution, Haraḷayya cursed the king and predicted a dishonourable end for him. Three Vīraśaiva men, named Jagadēva, Molleya, and Bommaya, fulfilled Haraḷayya's prediction by killing the king. Finally, all Vīraśaivas left Kalyāṇa and took refuge in several distant places.

The story of Haraḷayya as recorded here has clearly legendary traits: such as the illness of Madhuvayya caused by the shoes and the subsequent miraculous healing by the bath water from the shoemaker's tank. However, the story is definitely based on historical events. There is a contemporary vacana in which Haraḷayya and Madhuvayya are mentioned together:

> Kuladindadhikavendu hōrāḍuva aṇṇagaḷirā, kēḷirayyā:
> brāhmaṇanava Madhuvayya, caṇḍālanava Haraḷayya, ...[53]
>
> Listen, you brothers who are fighting about whose background is the highest:
> Madhuvayya was a Brāhmaṇa, and Haraḷayya was an untouchable, ...

Although the text does not give more information about the history of the saints, it is clear that both men belonged together in spite of their extreme difference in caste background. The author confirms that Madhuvayya was a Brāhmaṇa and Haraḷayya an untouchable; for the latter he uses the word 'caṇḍāla': the classical term for a ritually very impure man, mostly in connection with the occupation of a leather-

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53. SIDDHARĀMA, 519 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 186).

worker. But what happened exactly to Haraḷayya and Madhuvayya in that fatal year in the history of Vīraśaivism (probably the year 1167)? There is strong evidence that both devotees were indeed punished by king Bijjaḷa. Already the Basavapurāṇamu of Pālkurike Sōmanātha, written at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the Telugu language, records that Haraḷayya and Madhuvayya were arrested and blinded by order of king Bijjaḷa.[54] The later Kannaḍa version by Bhīmakavi (Basavapurāṇa, 1369) reiterates this; and so does the Śūnyasampādane (final version shortly after 1500).[55] These works, however, do not relate the story of the marriage of Madhuvayya's daughter to Haraḷayya's son. The reason for the cruel punishment is sought in king Bijjaḷa's violent and arbitrary rule and his hatred of the Vīraśaivas. The controversial marriage is mentioned for the first time in Śāntaliṅgadēśika's Bhairavēśvarakāvyada kathāsūtraratnākara of 1672 and the full story of the marriage is found only as late as the middle of the eighteenth century in Cannappakavi's Śaraṇalīlāmṛta.[56] It must be assumed that these later works have added many elements to the original account. Nevertheless, the core of the hagiography fits well in our picture of the twelfth century Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa. It is understandable that the early writers stressed the arbitrariness and hostility of king Bijjaḷa; but it is not very likely that he punished both men without any reason. Something must have happened which enraged the king. The combination of a Brāhmaṇa and one of the lowest untouchables suggests that a strong violation of caste regulations took place. It appears from the vacana literature that even the deeply-rooted custom of caste endogamy was attacked by the Vīraśaiva saints. Therefore, it is not unlikely that the reason for the martyrdom of Haraḷayya and Madhuvayya was a marriage between their children. Such a revolutionary violation of caste rules could indeed have provoked the great persecution of the Vīraśaivas which took place at Kalyāṇa in that year.

Haraḷayya became a popular figure in the history of Vīraśaivism. The story of his devotion and martyrdom occurs in most Vīraśaiva hagiographical works. In modern times, his popularity has even increased; because many Liṅgāyatas regard him as a forerunner of the twentieth century emancipation movement of the untouchables. Nowadays, there is even a man who is called 'modern Haraḷayya' because he followed the saint's example by making a shoe for Śiva out of a piece of skin from his thigh. Actually, he had the job of stripping the skin from his body done by a doctor, and so far he has only made one shoe; but he is quite determined to complete the pair.[57]

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Minister as Pariah

People from all castes were welcome in the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa; and consequently, there were even many untouchables who joined the new movement. But the story of Haraḷayya shows that society reacted strongly to the violation of age-old values. The leaders had to employ every means to convince the people inside and outside the community of the rightness of the new values. Basava doubtlessly played the major role in the propagation of a casteless society. He set an example by associating himself radically with the low-caste members of the Vīraśaiva community, as is amply testified by his vacanas.

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[54] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* VII (trl. p. 262), cf. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, p. 61.

[55] BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* LX: 4; *Śūnyasampādane* XXI: 18.

[56] HIREMATH, in: *Srī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, p. 28.

[57] I met this remarkable fellow at a big Liṅgāyata festival: the Śaraṇa Mēla at Kūḍalasaṅgama in January 1989.

Basava even went so far as to renounce his own Brāhmaṇa origins and regard the low-caste devotees as his relatives. He describes and eulogizes his new family ties in a number of interesting vacanas. The most radical of these poems is the following:

Cannayyana maneya dāsana maganu,
Kakkayyana maneya dāsiya magaḷu -
ivaribbaru holadalu beraṇige hōgi saṅgava māḍidaru.
Ivaribbarige huṭṭida maga nānu
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēva sākṣiyāgi.[58]

The boy of the servant in Cannayya's house
and the girl of the maid in Kakkayya's house -
they went both to the field to gather dung
and then they made love.
A child was born to them - that was me.
So may *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers* be my witness!

Here the Brāhmaṇa minister has completely abandoned the prestige of his high birth and he has assumed the background of the lowest people. He sketches the story of his origin in these untouchable circles. A boy and a girl, both from the servant class, went out to do the dirtiest and humblest job: namely to gather cow-dung for fuel. However, instead of doing their work, they made love to each other. From this illegitimate relationship of two undisciplined young servants he was born. A lower birth is hardly conceivable. But there is still one positive element in this utterly degraded background. Both those servant children belonged to the families of devotees; albeit devotees of untouchable castes. As we have seen before, Cannayya and Kakkayya were both very low-caste men, who nevertheless became honoured in Vīraśaiva circles because of their great devotion to Śiva. Cannayya belonged to the very low caste of the Mādaras and he is said to have been a stableman. Kakkayya was a Ḍōhara by caste and practised the traditional trade of this caste, tanning, which was regarded as the most defiling kind of work. Of course, the children of the servants of a stableman and a tanner cannot boast of any caste prestige; but the fact that they live with a pious family is enough for Basava. He prefers this kind of relationship with saints to the high status of his Brāhmaṇa birth. And he is convinced that the Lord of the Meeting Rivers agrees with his preference.

In several vacanas, Basava stresses that he owes the bond with God to the low-caste devotees in the Vīraśaiva community and not to his

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[58] BASAVA, 345 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 113; ARYA, p. 45; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 11; ZVELEBIL, p. 57). The other vacanas of this type are: BASAVA, 342, 345, 346, 347, 348, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 356, 472.

Brāhmaṇa family. He even uses his close contact with the pious untouchables as an argument which must compel God to show his mercy.

Appanu namma mādara Cannayya;
boppanu namma ḍōhara Kakkayya;
Cikkayyanemmayya kāṇayyā;
aṇṇanu namma kinnara Bommayya -
ennanētakkar̤iyari, Kūḍalasaṅgayyā?[59]

Our Cannayya, the untouchable, is my father,
and our Kakkayya, the tanner, is my uncle;
see, Cikkayya is our grandfather,
and our Bommayya, the lute-player, is my elder brother.
So why do you not know me,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers?

This vacana sketches a family portrait which includes some prominent devotees from the untouchable castes. The minister of the king dissociated himself radically from his aristocratic, Brāhmaṇa background. He regards Cannayya, from the untouchable Mādara caste, as his father; and the similarly untouchable tanner Kakkayya has become his elder uncle. A certain Cikkayya is presented as the head of this lowest of the low-caste family. His name (literally: 'the small one') indicates that he was a low-caste man as well. Finally, Bommayya acts as the poet's elder brother. This devotee, famous for his lute, comes from a rather high-caste background, for he followed the occupation of a goldsmith.[60] The poem seems to suggest that two high-caste men, Basava and Bommayya, have been adopted by a family of untouchables. In this way, Basava expresses his gratitude towards the devotees, and in particular the low-caste śaraṇas, for their example of true piety. He experienced his contact with those devout people as a rebirth; and he wants to make clear in utter humility that they are his educators. However, his intention was not to indicate real bonds of relationship: no real adoption of any kind had taken place. The terminology remains rather vague and several terms are interchangeable. In this vacana, Cannayya is called his father (appa), but the word which is used in connection with Kakkayya (boppa) usually means father as well. Here it could indicate the typical role of a second father, played by the father's elder brother. In another vacana, however, Kakkayya is called the author's father (appa), while Cannayya becomes his grandfather. There is also a poem in which Basava calls Kakkayya his father's younger brother and Cannayya his grandfather. And finally, there is a text in which Kakkayya appears as Basava's father's elder brother and Cannayya as his father's younger brother.[61] Obviously, the metaphor can be elaborated in several ways; but the meaning remains the same. Basava uses these pseudo-family relations as a weapon in his struggle against caste prejudice. He wants to make clear that he owes his spiritual existence to so-called un-

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59. BASAVA, 348 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 114; IYENGAR, p. 20; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 14).
60. His story in told in SŌMANĀTHA's *Basavapurāṇamu* V (trl. pp. 171-177), and in BHĪMAKAVI's *Basavapurāṇa* XXVII, XXVIII; cf. T.S. ŚAMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, .Mysore, 1967, p. 86; A.R. JAYARAM, *Śri Basaveśvara and His Contemporaries*, Siddaganga, 1950, pp. 88-92. He is also called Kinnari Brahmayya.
61. See BASAVA, 342, 350, 352 respectively.

touchables. In the vacana quoted above he even appeals to his low-caste relatives as an argument to obtain the divine mercy. If he stems from such a devout family, how could the Lord of the Meeting Rivers ignore him?

The vacanas of this type are a convincing demonstration that Basava was prepared to reckon only with spiritual achievement and not with the traditional values of ascription. Not the status connected with birth should determine one's place in the society, but solely progress on the spiritual path that has been attained. In associating himself with the untouchables, he overstepped all the barriers erected by the caste ideology. The Brāhmaṇa treasurer of the king became one with the untouchable devotees; and he even regarded them as his superiors. The other saints of high-caste background did not follow Basava in his radical solidarity with the degraded castes. They agreed with him that true spirituality was of more value than high birth; but they would not consider the lowest-born people to be their parents.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Breaking with the Past

Although not everybody went as far as Basava in his solidarity with the untouchables, it was the conviction of all vacanakāras that caste pride formed a hindrance to spiritual development. So they put up a vigorous fight against the prejudices that had split up the population into so many castes. The adherents of Vīraśaivism had to break with their past and give up distinctions based on caste. It became a sin in the eyes of the saints to judge a fellow Vīraśaiva by his birth. The converts were supposed to leave their caste culture behind them; and bad habits of the various castes were excoriated in particular. Certainly, it was one of the most difficult tasks to bring about a change in the morality on this point; because the caste distinctions were so deeply rooted in the Indian culture. All great vacanakāras made their contribution and devoted poems to this topic.

An interesting text about the new caste ethics is the following vacana by Cannabasava.

> Brāhmaṇa bhaktanādaḍēnayyā, sūtakapātakaṅgaḷa
> bidadannakka?
> Kṣatriya bhaktanādaḍēnayyā, krōdha hiṃseya biḍadannakka?
> Vaiśya bhaktanādaḍēnayyā, kapaṭa suḷḷu biḍadannakka?
> Śūdra bhaktanādaḍēnayyā, svajātiyembuda biḍadannakka?
> Intī jātiḍambhakara meccuvane,
> Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēva?[62]

What if a Brāhmaṇa has become a devotee,
as long as he has not given up the sins of pollution?
What if a Kṣatriya has become a devotee,
as long as he has not given up agression and violence?
What if a Vaiśya has become a devotee,
as long as he has not given up cheating and fraud?
What if a Śūdra has become a devotee,

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[62] CANNABASAVA, 219.

as long as he has not given up speaking of his own caste?
Is He pleased with these caste hypocrisies,
the Lord of the Lovely Confluence?

The vacana shows how the theoretical construction of four varṇas and the actual classification in jātis were intertwined. Cannabasava, the great systematist, had a preference for the enumeration of concepts and categories. Here he sums up the four varṇa categories with the aberrations which were traditionally attributed to them. The message of the text is, of course, that converts from various castes have all to give up the bad inclinations connected with their caste background. Brāhmaṇas tend to be very scrupulous about pollution; because the high degree of pureness of their caste must be preserved by every member. Cannabasava calls this attitude a sin; and he questions the value of a conversion to Vīraśaivism without renouncement of such sins. Likewise, the Kṣatriya who becomes a devotee has to give up the agression and violence that are typical of this category of warriors. The bad characteristics of the third category, the Vaiśyas, are cheating and malversation; because they are traditionally engaged in trade. The fourth category of the Śūdras is, according to Cannabasava, especially inclined to be completely absorbed by the interests of the own caste. Here, the author uses for the first time the word for an actually functioning caste group, jāti. The conclusion of the vacana, expressed in a rhetorical question, is that God does not like the arrogance associated with castes (jāti). Unintentionally, the author gives an interesting picture of the caste theory as it was used in his days. The four varṇas, including their traditional occupations and purity characteristics, are clearly distinguished. The actual social groups in Indian society, however, were the various jātis. Together, they constitute the caste pyramid which the Vīraśaiva saints tried to demolish; because it was their conviction that caste pride was not pleasing to God.

The admonition to give up loyalty to one's caste is expressed in various ways by many saints. Allama writes in a long poem about the conditions for real devotion:

.....
Bhakta bhaktanendēnu?
Jāti varṇāśrama kula gōtra nāma sīmeyemba
ṣaḍubhrame kaṇṇinalli kavidu ōlāḍuvannabara bhaktane? .....[63]

.....
What makes a devotee a devotee?
Is it as long as he roams about with in his eyes the six errors,
namely caste, life categories, background, lineage, name,
and region? .....

Allama uses the words jāti and varṇa in this poem side by side. Both belong to the 'six errors' which must be given up in order to attain the state of real devotion. Caste (jāti) is the first misconception that hinders people on their way of devotion. The second barrier is called varṇāśrama, meaning the classical divison into four caste categories and four stages of life. The other errors are the pride in one's own background (kula), lineage, name and native soil. The rhetorical question whether a devotee's life may be determined by those six errors, is of course answered in the negative.

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[63] ALLAMA, 782.

Siddharāma questions likewise the worth of caste background.

> Caturvarṇiyādaḍēnu?
> caturvarṇātītane vīraśaiva nōḍā. .....[64]
>
> What does it mean to belong to the system of the four castes?
> Look, he is a Vīraśaiva who transcends the four castes. .....

The four caste categories (varṇa) are strongly relativized here as far as the devotees are concerned. A true Vīraśaiva has passed the phase in which people need to distinguish themselves from others with the help of their birthright. Consequently, the vacanakāras call on the devotees to liberate themselves from all taints of caste. Even the more traditional authors, such as Allama and Siddharāma, made vacanas to express this exhortation.

Basava, however, again adopted the most radical standpoint. He did not regard caste as an entity that can be transcended by one who is filled with devotion, but he rejected the whole caste system and tried to eradicate all caste consciousness in the Vīraśaiva community. Several vacanas show his uncompromising attitude regarding caste.

> Āva kulavādaḍēnu? Śivaliṅgaviddavane kulajanu!
> Kulavanaṛasuvare śaraṇaralli, jātisaṅkaranāda baḷika?
> Śivadharmakulējātaḥ punarjanma vivarjitaḥ |
> Umā mātā pitā Rudra Aiśvaraṃ kulamēva ca || endudāgi,
> okkuda kombenavaralli, kūsa koḍuve,
> Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, nambuve nimma śaraṇaranu.[65]
>
> What does it mean which background you have?
> He who wears the liṅga of Śiva is well-born!
> Should we inquire about background among the devotees,
> after the castes have been mixed?
> This is the saying:
> *Who is born in the caste of Śiva's lore, free from rebirth is he;*
> *Umā his mother, Rudra his sire, and verily the Śiva fold his tribe,*
> so I shall take the leftovers at their place,
> and I shall give my daughter to them,
> for I believe in your devotees,
> *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.*

Like the previous texts, this vacana is meant to teach the people that they should not pay any attention to traditional caste barriers. Basava formulates this typically Vīraśaiva lesson in an impressive way. First, he reiterates the core of his doctrine about the equality of people: the wearing of the personal liṅga has the same value as high birth. Then he adds an interesting argument. The fact that the castes (jāti) have been mixed in the community of śaraṇas means that it has become useless to ask questions about the social background of a devotee. The Vīraśaivas have already abolished caste by living together in their spiritual community at Kalyāṇa. The existence of that congregation is not a lawless aberration but the proof that a society on another basis is possible. Subsequently, he gives a Sanskrit saying as a legitimation of this revolutionary practice. The saying stresses the utmost importance of conversion to the religion of the Śaivas; because it states that such a convert has transcended the cycle of rebirth. He has entered a new state of existence in which Śiva's wife (Umā or Pārvatī) is his mother and Śiva himself (here called Rudra) is his father. His only caste is Śaivism and so he is not anymore liable to the human prejudices of caste. On the basis of this saying, Basava decides on his own course of action. He does not want to give only a theory; but he also points to its practical consequences. Since the caste barriers among the devotees are removed, he will accept any food from them and give his daughter in marriage to a devotee of whatever caste. Thus Basava indicates the new attitude that must grow in the Vīraśaiva community: he advocates unrestricted commensality and connubium. That was certainly a revolutionary standpoint in the twelfth century.

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[64] SIDDHARĀMA, 450 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 162).
[65] BASAVA, 717 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 237; IYENGAR, p. 60; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 49). See also BASAVA, 450, 452, 868.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Caste in a New Sense

The vacanas of Basava and the other leading Vīraśaivas demonstrate evidently that the concept of caste was severely criticized in their movement. Nevertheless, they use the caste concept sometimes as an illustration in their moral teachings. It is interesting to consider a few examples of this new employment of the old caste classification.

One of Basava's vacanas has become paradigmatic in this respect. It is a short text which could easily be memorized. It has become very famous in the history of Vīraśaivism.

Koluvanē mādiga, holasu timbuvanē holeya!
Kulavēno avandira kulavēno?
Sakala jīvātmarige lēsane bayasuva
namma Kūḍalasaṅgana śaraṇare kulajaru![66]

He who kills is a pariah,
he who eats impure food is an untouchable!
What is caste, so to say, what is caste?
The devotees of our *Lord of the Meeting Rivers*,
who wish all living creatures well,
- they are well-born!

The subject of this vacana is vegetarianism. Basava was strongly opposed to animal slaughter and in several vacanas he condemns the habit of eating meat. In this little poem too he wants to make clear that non-vegetarian food is offensive to the divine law. In this respect, he uses caste concepts as a metaphor. Two names of very low castes are

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66. BASAVA, 590 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 193; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 19; ARYA, p. 61; IYENGAR, p. 20; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 151; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 64; UMASHANKAR, p. 39; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 30). See also BASAVA, 575, 582, 586.

mentioned: the Mādigas who were traditionally leather-workers; and the Holeyas, a general term for untouchables, especially for those who removed dead animals from the village. The meaning of the vacana is that those who cause animal slaughter are guilty, but not the people who are employed because of the slaughtering by others. Traditionally, the leather-worker is regarded as the most degraded, but, in the eyes of Basava, the butcher must be treated as a pariah. Likewise, the meat-eater must be considered to be untouchable and not the man who performs the useful duty of removing carcasses. The background of birth (kula) has no meaning; but the actual behaviour of a person can make him untouchable. By way of contrast to these evil-doers, Basava portrays the devotees as people who have respect for all souls: including animal life. Therefore, they are really the 'high-born' people. The vacana has a twofold effect. It condemns animal slaughter and meat-eating. On the other hand, it gives to the traditionally impure castes a new prestige; because they are recognized as valuable members of the community. The latter meaning has given this text an immense popularity in modern times; because it is close to the ideals of abolishing untouchability in twentieth century India.[67]

Some other vacanakāras follow this moral usage of the traditional caste concepts. It is, however, remarkable that we find similar vacanas as the one quoted above particularly in the collections of low-caste devotees. The new way of handling the old caste classification will have appealed to them greatly for obvious reasons. The repression of the lowest castes was very severe; and many members of those castes would have been attracted by a movement that made social mobility a real possibility. That was quite unknown in traditional Hindu society. Many low-caste people joined the Vīraśaiva movement and adopted the new way of speaking about caste as a moral category. So we find the theme, for instance, in the poems of the shoemaker who had assumed the name of Mādara Cannayya.

Naḍe nuḍi siddhāntavādalli kula holeyilla.
Nuḍi lēsu naḍeyadhamavādalli adē biḍugaḍeyillada hole.
Kaḷavu pāradvāraṅgaḷalli holabanar̤iyade
keṭṭu naḍevutta matte kulajaremba oḍaluṇṭe?
Ācāravē kula, anācāravē hole.
Intī ubhayava tiḷidu ar̤iyabēku.
Kaiyuḷigatti aḍigūṇṭigeḍeyāgabēḍa ar̤i Nijātmarāmarāmanā.[68]

If action and word are in agreement,
you are high-caste, not untouchable.
But if the word is good and the action bad,
the impurity is certainly not removed.
If you, not knowing the right way, act wrongly
by resorting to theft and adultery,
can you still have the body of a well-born man?
Right action is good caste, bad action is low caste.
So you must understand the meaning of both concepts.

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[67] See fig. 1 (frontispiece).
[68] MĀDARA CANNAYYA, in: P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, 1599 (cf. H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968, pp. 183-184).

One should not sink to the level of the awl and perish.
Mark that, *O Enjoyment of the delight of my own soul.*

The meaning of the shoemaker's moral teaching is quite clear. His main point is that good words must be accompanied by right action. He condemns people who speak noble words but do not display corresponding behaviour. They are denoted by the poet as untouchables; because their bad actions pollute them; and such pollution cannot be balanced by soft words. In particular, hypocritical high-caste people are attacked by Cannayya. He expresses his aversion from the ritually pure people who nevertheless indulge in evil desires and even commit crimes like theft and adultery. In his opinion, they cannot boast of their high birth; because their sinful behaviour has made them untouchables. Thus, the poet gives absolute priority to moral practice; and, consequently, his conclusion is quite simply that good conduct is high caste, whereas bad conduct is untouchability. The caste concept is completely moralized here. Nobody can take pride in his birth anymore; but everybody has to make the choice between right and wrong in his moral conduct. Then, there are only two castes left, one constituted by the people of right behaviour and the other one constituted by the wrong-doers. The latter is equated with the traditional state of untouchability. So the shoemaker can warn his audience not to sink to the level of the shoemaker; because that lowest level of morality ruins man. It is this playing with the traditional contempt for his own caste background that makes Cannayya's vacana a remarkable text amidst the great number of vacanas on caste.

A similar adoption of the caste concept can be found in the vacanas of some other authors as well. The ferryman Cauḍayya wrote a very long text in which all kinds of wrong-doers are depicted as untouchables.

.....
Tāyige baidavanē holeya.
Tandege uttara koṭṭavanē holeya.
Tandege baidavanē holeya.
Koḍuva haṇakke aḍḍabandavanē holeya.
Naḍudārige muḷḷu haccidavanē holeya.
Brāhmaṇana kuttigeya koydavanē holeya. .....[69]

.....
He who abuses his mother is an untouchable.
He who answers his father back is an untouchable.
He who abuses his father is an untouchable.
He who obstructs the giving of money is an untouchable.
He who throws thorns on the footpath is an untouchable.
He who cuts the throat of a Brāhmaṇa is an untouchable. .....

The concept of untouchability appears again to be very fruitful in the context of moral admonitions. The above-quoted lines are only a part of the long catalogue of sins that defile men in the eyes of the ferryman. Although this application of the term untouchable reflects a revolutionary understanding of caste, the content of Cauḍayya's moral teachings is less sensational. He uses the new meaning of untouchability for the teaching of the traditional values of Indian culture. So, in this fragment of the text, he criticizes rebelliousness against the parents, especially the father, obstructing almsgiving, hindering passengers, and even the classical mortal sin of Brāhmaṇa murder. It proves that the Vīraśaiva saints were not in every respect rebels against the traditional values and norms.

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[69] AMBIGARA CAUḌAYYA, in: P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, 1609.

Several vacanakāras made use of the old caste terminology to express their views on moral purity. It seems to be a new mode of expression for them: a metaphor suggested by the exceptional circumstances in the Kalyāṇa community. Only for Basava is it more than just a metaphor. In his texts, the caste concept returns as a part of an untraditional, but coherent theory about equality and variety among human beings. In a long text, which became famous in Vīraśaivism, he unfolded this remarkable theory.

Holegaṇḍallade piṇḍada nelegāśrayavilla.
Jala-binduvina vyavahāra ondē:
āseyāmiṣarōṣaharuṣa viṣayādigaḷellā onde.
Ēnanōdi, ēna kēḷi, ēnu phala?
Kulajanembudakke āvudu dṛṣṭa?
'Saptadhātusamaṃ piṇḍaṃ samayōnisamudbhavaṃ
ātmajīvasamāyuktaṃ varṇānāṃ kiṃ prayōjanaṃ' endudāgi,
Kāsi kammār̤anāda, bīsi maḍivaḷanāda;
hāsanikki sāliganāda; vēdavanōdi hāruvanāda.
Karṇadalli janisidavaruṇṭe jagadoḷage?
Idu kāraṇa Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā,
liṅgasthalavanar̤idavane kulajanu![70]

There is no implantation of the embryo without pollution.
The emission of sperm is always the same:
desire and lust, passion and excitement, all sensualities are the same.
Whatever you read or learn, what is the fruit of it?
Which visible criteria are there to say: well-born?
This is the saying:
Out of the same seven elements every embryo is formed,
its origin is the same within the same womb,
the alliance of soul and life the same,
so why is there any necessity of castes?
Whoever was forging became a smith,
and whoever was washing, he became a washerman.
Whoever laid the warp became a weaver,
and whoever read the Vedas, he became a Brāhmaṇa.
Is there anybody in the world who is born through the ear?
Therefore, *Lord of the Meeting Rivers*,
only he who knows the realm of the Liṅga, is well-born.

The vacana opens significantly with the word for pollution or untouchability (hole). According to Basava, the procreation of every human being is contaminated by pollution. The reason is that the womb was

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70. BASAVA, 589 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 193; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 21; ARYA, p. 60; IYENGAR, pp. 20-21; SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, p. 256; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 63; UMASHANKAR, pp. 38-39; YARAVINTELIMATH, p. 31).

traditionally considered to be the main source of defilement, and consequently the first meaning of the word 'hole' is lochia. In such an utterly defiling situation, human life finds its origin. It is brought about by the sexual passion that is similarly impure. Nobody can claim to have had a less defiling origin: is there anybody who was born through the ear? Since the beginning of all life is stained by pollution, any pretension to high birth is meaningless. Reading and learning cannot provide any knowledge that makes it possible to detect a visible criterion of purity in the defiling process of procreation and birth. Every human origin is the same. Basava gives a Sanskrit saying in order to support this conviction. It confirms that every embryo is the same since it is composed of the same seven elements (bone, flesh, fat, blood, marrow, chyle, and sperm). The origin in the womb is the same with the same union of the eternal principle and a living soul. The conclusion is: what is the use of castes (varṇa)? Then Basava gives a vivid description of the variety among the people. Certainly, there are many differences between people: such as the differences between artisans, cleaners, textile workers, and priests. But these differences are not determined by birth. Heating the iron qualifies a man to be a smith; whereas beating clothes on the stones in the water makes someone a washerman. In the same way, a weaver is one who works at the loom; and one who reads the holy scriptures becomes a Brāhmaṇa. A high-caste profession and a low-caste one are juxtaposed in both sentences in order to stress that this law is applicable at all levels. The final sentence of the vacana reiterates the general Vīraśaiva conviction that a well-born man is one who is acquainted with the mystical truth of the liṅga that removes all pollution.

In this vacana, Basava displays a pragmatic attitude towards social differences in society. He rejects every distinction on the basis of birth with the simple argument that every origin of human life is full of defilement. Therefore, there is no reason to boast of a so-called high birth. Professions are not connected with birth through the concept of caste; but, in his view, professional status is based on the choice of and ability for a certain kind of labour. This argument is remarkable in the context of twelfth century India, which was characterized by a strong feeling of caste. However, Basava was not the first one to reject the pretensions of high-caste people in this way. There is a surprising similarity with some texts that are attributed to the Buddha. According to the Sutta-Nipāta, Gotama the Buddha said:

> Yo hi koci manussesu gorakkhaṃ upajīvati,
> evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi, kassako so, na brāhmaṇo.
> Yo hi koci manussesu puthu sippena jīvati,
> evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi, sippiko so, na brāhmaṇo.
> Yo hi koci manussesu vohāraṃ upajīvati,
> evaṃ Vāseṭṭha jānāhi, vāṇijo so, na brāhmaṇo.
> .....
> Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ brūmi yonijaṃ mattisambhavaṃ,
> bhovādi nāma so hoti, sa ve hoti sakiñcano,
> - akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.[71]

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[71] *Sutta-Nipāta* 612-614, 620; see also *Dhammapada* 396.

Whoever among the people lives by keeping cows,
him, Vāseṭṭha, you must know as a farmer, not as a Brāhmaṇa.
Whoever among the people lives by one of the various crafts,
him, Vāseṭṭha, you must know as an artisan, not as a Brāhmaṇa.
Whoever among the people lives by business,
him, Vāseṭṭha, you must know as a merchant, not as a Brāhmaṇa.
.....
I do not call someone a Brāhmaṇa because he was born from a womb,
he is just denoted as arrogant and fuli of attachment;
- but one who is without attachment or desire,
him I call a Brāhmaṇa.

The text is taken from a dialogue between the young Brāhmaṇa Vāseṭṭha and the Buddha on the disposition of people by birth. The Buddha denies that there are diversities determined by birth as in the plant or animal world. The differences between human beings are only pragmatic designations, and as an illustration follows a list of professions by which people are characterized. In the same way a man can only be called a Brāhmaṇa because of his moral qualities. Even the differences between untouchables and Brāhmaṇas are not determined by birth in the eyes of the Buddha, as another text from the same collection makes clear.

Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmaṇo,
kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmaṇo ti.[72]

Not by birth does one become an untouchable,
not by birth does one become a Brāhmaṇa.
By conduct one becomes an untouchable,
by conduct one becomes a Brāhmaṇa.

The striking similarity between these texts and the vacana quoted above raises the question of whether Basava could have been influenced by the Buddhist tradition. Of course, it cannot be proved that the twelfth century Vīraśaiva saint derived ideas from Gotama the Buddha who preached as early as the sixth century B.C. Nevertheless, there is an indication which makes it rather probable that Basava was familiar to some extent with the teachings of the Buddha. Whilst the influence of Buddhism was generally declining in India after the seventh century, there were some regions in present Karnataka where the position of the Buddhists remained very strong. We know that in 1095, only about ten years before Basava's birth, a large Buddhist monastery was founded in Ḍambaḷ (in the present Dharwar District).[73] Ḍambaḷ later became one of the most important religious centres of Vīraśaivism. It is rather probable that the strong resistance against the caste system, as it occurred in the Buddhist tradition, was still preserved in the last strongholds of Buddhism in Northern Karnataka when Basava tried to find an alternative for the strict Brāhmaṇa values of his family. It is an obvious suggestion that he also acquainted himself with the Buddhist tradition. In that tradition, he would certainly have been fascinated by the egalitarian philosophy that rejected discrimination on the basis of caste.

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[72] *Sutta-Nipāta* 142.

[73] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, Part II: *History of the Konkan Dakhan and Soutern Marátha Country*, Bombay, 1896, p. 228; *id.*, Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, Bombay, 1886, p. 120.

The Twelfth Century - Concluding Remarks

The initial period of the Vīraśaiva movement was characterized by a severe criticism of the caste system. Basava expressed in several vacanas the conviction that all worshippers of Śiva are equal. He rejected the division of people into numerous castes and he only acknowledged the difference between devotees and unbelievers. In a few of his vacanas, he went even further and preached the fundamental equality of all human beings. The other vacanakāras were generally not so magnanimous as the great leader and some of the texts reflect their hesitation about the entry of low-caste people into the movement. But mostly, they followed Basava's argument that devotion to Śiva transcends all caste barriers.

The symbolism of the liṅga plays an important role in Basava's egalitarian social views. He taught that the status of people is drasticly changed by the wearing of the divine symbol. For low-born people, it is the way to rise to the level of the highest castes; whereas high-born people without the personal liṅga lose their high status. The theme of the levelling liṅga is also found sometimes in the vacanas of other authors; but it seems to be a favourite idea of Basava.

The function of the liṅga was seen by the Vīraśaiva saints as removing pollution. Since a liṅga-wearer is free from all kinds of pollution, including those connected with caste, there are no longer any barriers to social contact. Especially, Basava stressed his willingness to associate with all devotees without any fear for pollution. In his eyes, the only real defilement is immoral speech or behaviour.

Consequently, the Vīraśaiva community, as it existed in particular at Kalyāṇa, was open to converts from all castes. Again, it was in the first place Basava who advocated vigorously the admittance of all low-caste people. He expressed his disgust of caste distinctions; and he even relativized his own Brāhmaṇa background. Other vacanakāras sometimes expressed doubts about the moral qualities of the untouchables who were used to a very impure way of life. But all authors shared the admiration for a number of pious devotees of low background in the Kalyāṇa community. The examples of the ferryman Cauḍayya and the shoemaker Haraḷayya show how very influential low-caste saints could be: either because of their texts or their behaviour. The full participation of the low-caste devotees, among whom many untouchables, in the Vīraśaiva movement is the best proof that the teachings of Basava and the other leaders did indeed have a great effect.

The egalitarian ideals of the Vīraśaiva community implied a new morality. Everybody had to accept the converts from the lower strata; and the leaders stressed the new moral values instead of the traditional caste distinctions. People were admonished to break with their past and give up all caste pride together with the vices of their background. Basava set an example by renouncing the high status of his caste and office: in many texts he declared himself to be a relative of the lowest devotees in the community. He even advocated full commensality and connubium among the śaraṇas.

In the new setting, caste terminology could only be used for the purpose of illustrating moral teaching. Thus, we find in the texts a number of striking examples of a new application of the caste concept. Untouchability was identified with immoral behaviour; whilst good conduct was praised as being high-caste. It is remarkable that we find this new use of caste terminology particularly in the vacanas of Basava and in the texts of a few 'untouchable' vacanakāras. The latter were obviously charmed by this new possibility of redefining the detested terms connected with their background. Basava is generally the one who takes the most radical stand on the caste issue. The moralization of the caste concept seems to be his personal contribution to the Vīraśaiva tradition. And the pragmatic disconnection of caste and profession is likewise his point. His texts on this topic show a striking similarity with the preaching of the Buddha. It is not improbable that Basava revived in this respect part of the ancient Buddhist ideological heritage which had always been preserved as a small undercurrent in the caste-ridden culture of the Kannaḍa country.

The Fifteenth Century - Śūnyasampādane

The contribution of Basava and his fellow vacanakāras to a new understanding of the dignity of human kind was enormous. Their ideas on the equality of all people had a great impact. We have seen that their criticism of the traditional caste consciousness brought about a major change in social relations within the Kalyāṇa community, in particular on the position of the so-called untouchables. Now we have to investigate whether these revolutionary ideas were still effective in the following ages. The religious community at Kalyāṇa broke up after the murder of king Bijjaḷa and the Vīraśaiva devotees were scattered about the Kannaḍa and Telugu countries. They took with them the views on devotion and social equality as contained in the vacanas. In different circumstances, they tried to keep their idealism alive and to put Vīraśaiva teaching into practice. It is very difficult to follow the course of history; because there are hardly any reliable accounts from the first centuries after the Kalyāṇa period. In the fifteenth century records, however, Vīraśaivism becomes visible again. Several authors revived the Vīraśaiva heritage and gave a new form to it. There seems to have been a new activity in the organization of monasticism and a certain revival of the Vīraśaiva spirituality and morality.

The first important source of this period is the Śūnyasampādane. It was compiled in various versions during the fifteenth century. The final version by Gūḷūra Siddhavīraṇārya, which we shall use here, appeared in the first years of the sixteenth century. The book consists mainly of vacanas from the twelfth century; but those texts are arranged in a framework by the successive compilers. They wrote a narrative which connected the selected ancient vacanas; and, thus, they pretended to give an account of the discussions in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' and other discourses of the first generation vacanakāras. Their stories have most probably not too much historical value, and reflect more the views of the compilers than the actual events at Kalyāṇa. This becomes quite clear from the way in which Basava is pushed into the background; while Allama is made the chief leader: almost of divine nature. Apparently, a detached sage like Allama fitted better into their spiritual culture than the revolutionary Basava. For our purpose, the compilation is very useful; because we can get an idea of the convictions of these fifteenth century writers. They reveal their own insights into the way in which they handle the abundant material from the first stage of Vīraśaivism.

When we read the Śūnyasampādane looking for statements about caste, it becomes quite clear that the book stems from another context than the twelfth century vacana literature. None of the original texts about the equality of people found a place among the more than one and a half thousand vacanas collected in the Śūnyasaṃpādane. Obviously, caste is hardly a theme anymore in the Vīraśaiva teaching of the fifteenth century as it is depicted in this authoritative work. The compilers seem to have omitted deliberately almost every text that could refer to the revolutionary social ethics of their community in the initial stage.[74]

Only one aspect of the early history of the community could not be ignored by the fifteenth century authors. Low-caste śaraṇas had played an important role in the community at Kalyāṇa; and some of their stories had to find a place in a book that pretended to give an account of the spiritual discourses in the old headquarters of Vīraśaivism. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane we find several vacanas of low-caste devotees; such as the tanner Kakkayya, the washerman Mācayya, and Haḍapada Appaṇṇa, the barber. Even in their own texts, however, references to their untouchable background are exceptional. But there are some examples, such as the following text, in which Kakkayya praises Basava with the words:

> Enna kaṣṭakulada sūtaka
> nimma hasta muṭṭidalli bayalāyittu.
> Śuklaśōṇitadindāda sūtaka
> liṅga muṭṭaloḍane bayalāyittu. .....[75]
>
> The taint of my bad caste
> has vanished by the touch of your hand.
> The taint caused by semen and blood
> has vanished by the touch of Liṅga. .....

The text as such is not very remarkable. The devotee thanks his guru for liberating him from all earthly bonds: a common theme in the devotional literature. The guru has removed the pollution of being born as a human being: including the impurity of his low caste background. It must be noted, however, that the compilers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane make the tanner say these words at the very moment that he departs from this earthly life and attains union with the Infinite. This suggests that the removal of his low caste background has more to do with the highest spiritual achievement than with social equality. Only in heaven is the tanner no longer a tanner.

[74] The concept of caste (jāti) is only mentioned in *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XVIII:19, where 'the houses of the eighteen castes' is an image of inhabited territories as opposed to 'the mountains'. According to a traditional classification there were eighteen castes (jāti).

[75] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XX:78. Akkanāgamma, sister of Basava and thus a Brāhmaṇa woman, thanks her brother likewise for removing 'the impurity of background' (kulasūtaka): *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XX:75. So the term is not restricted to untouchable or low caste.

There are more indications of an ambiguous position of low-caste śaraṇas in the Śūnyasampādane. Haḍapada Appaṇṇa, for instance, is mentioned several times as one of the most important vacanakāras; together with Basava, Allama, Cannabasava, and Siddharāma.[76] On the other hand, he plays a somewhat tragic role in the important episode of Allama's arrival at Kalyāṇa.[77] According to the Śūnyasampādane, it was Haḍapada Appaṇṇa who was the first witness of the arrival of two great saints, Allama and Siddharāma, at the gate of Basava's villa. Appaṇṇa went inside in order to inform the master of the house; but Basava, who was worshipping the liṅga, did not want to come out. So he sent Appaṇṇa back in order to welcome the visitors in his name. But Allama refused with anger (muniṣanoḷagiṭṭukoṇḍu) to be received by just a messenger (aṭṭāṭikeyalli).[78] Despite the many kind words of Appaṇṇa, the visitors remained adamant; and Appaṇṇa was not able to mollify Basava either. So Cannabasava had to intervene before Basava understood his duty and received the holy visitors personally. This episode makes clear that the barber was still, in the eyes of the fifteenth century authors, no more than a servant. He might have reached a high level in his spiritual utterances; but his social position was nevertheless still determined by his caste.

However, there is one low-caste devotee who receives unqualified praise in the Śūnyasampādane. Maḍivāḷa Mācayya, the washerman, is honoured as a saint who towers above almost all others. The fifteenth century authors call him respectfully Maḍivāḷamācitandegaḷu: the great Father Māci the Washerman. The ninth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane is completely devoted to his spiritual excellence. First, Cannabasava honours the washerman, saying that he owes his spiritual insight to Mācayya and Basava. Not only two of Cannabasava's vacanas but also the linking text of the fifteenth century, thus, equate Mācayya and Basava. Then, Allama puts the washerman to the test and questions him critically about his background and spiritual achievements. In several vacanas, Mācayya's answer is given. It is remarkable in this composition that the washerman takes the lead and addresses his interrogator as if the latter were his pupil:

.....

nīnu kartanāgi, nānu bhṛtyanāgi, avadharisayyā.[79]

.....

I have become the master, you the servant: listen to me!

Allama raises some objections; but Mācayya answers him self-confidently. When Allama is not yet satisfied, Mācayya refers him to Basava who knows his spiritual progress. This turn in the narrative enables the composer to include the several vacanas in praise of Mācayya which were written by Basava. Then, the washerman gets the opportunity to return the compliments with some vacanas in praise of Basava. Meanwhile, Allama is convinced of Mācayya's spiritual excellence and he praises him accordingly. A new series of reciprocal eulogies follows in which the three saints compete to extol the other. Later on, Cannabasava joins in the common praise. Then, we reach the climax of this chapter: when the washerman prays to be blessed by Cannabasava who had at the beginning pointed to him as his spiritual benefactor.

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[76] See *Śūnyasampādane* VI:35; VII:1; XII:1; XIII:1; XIII:7; XIV:1; XVI:1; XXI: 78, 79.

[77] *Śūnyasampādane* V.

[78] *Śūnyasampādane* V:4. Haḍapada Appaṇṇa plays also the role of Basava's messenger in the final chapter of the book. Then he has to fetch Basava's wife Nilamma from Kalyāṇa to Kūḍalasaṅgama: *Śūnyasampādane* XXI:40-46; see pages 177-178, 201.

[79] *Śūnyasampādane* IX:10.

Ondu kaiya bayalanenage koṭṭanu.
Ondu kaiya bayala Cennabasavaṇṇaṅge koṭṭanu.
Nīvu bandaharendu
eṇṭusāvira varuṣa ogedogedu biḷidu māḍuttiddenu.
Ondu biḷida - Basavaṇṇā, ninna liṅgakke koḍendu koṭṭare,
liṅgakke koḍalollade taleya suttikoṇḍanu.
Maḍiya kūliya bēḍahōdare,
biḷida haṛidu enna mēle bīsāṭanu.
Nīnuṭṭa bīḷuḍigeya
Cennabasavaṇṇana kaiyalli nirāḷavanenage koḍisā Prabhuve,
Kalidēvaradēvā.[80]

With one hand he gave the Void to me
and with the other hand he gave the void to Cannabasava.
Saying that you could come,
I was making it white,
washing and washing for eight thousand years.
Giving one piece of white, I said:
'Basava, use this for your liṅga',
but he did not want to give it to his liṅga
and wrapped it round his head.
When I went to ask the wage for washing,
he tore the piece of white and threw it to me.
O Prabhu, let serenity be given to me
from the hands of Cannabasava,
which is the garb that you have worn,
O Heroic God.

This very difficult verse gives us some insight into the washerman's spirituality. It is a typical example of an allegorical poem (beḍagina vacana). Only a few vacanakāras were well-versed in this esoteric art and Mācayya was one of them. He describes how he received the sacred knowledge from the hands of Basava, together with Cannabasava. This mystical lore is indicated by the word 'Void' (bayalu = śūnya), a term that is typical of Vīraśaivism. Mācayya relates that he was less fortunate in the development of the holy gift than Cannabasava. Here the vacana becomes very fascinating; because the poet represents his spiritual activity with images from his daily work. He has given an incredible time to purify his life: he has been washing for eight thousand years. But his guru was not content with the result: the white cloth was not clean enough to use in liṅga-worship, but could only be used for a turban. Basava refused to give him his grace: he did not want to pay the fee for washing. So the washerman's spiritual quest has proved to be a failure in his own eyes; and now he asks to be blessed with the spiritual experience of his fellow adept, Cannabasava. The latter's mystical attainment is so great that it can be compared with a piece of cloth that has been worn by God. And that is more than a washerman can achieve!

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[80] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* IX:51. See for this vacana the commentary of S.S. BHOOSNURMATH, *Man the Divine*, Adoni, 1979, pp. 177-178.

After this vacana, the ninth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane ends with a verse by Cannabasava who denies that he is greater than Mācayya and, finally, Mācayya's poem in praise of Basava and Cannabasava and Allama. The circle is closed: all four saints have proved to have attained the same high spiritual level. It is not unlikely that this chapter reflects a historical conflict in which Allama put the washerman, although a disciple of Basava and a companion of Cannabasava, to the test before he could accept him as a real mystic. But the greatness of Mācayya was undeniable: not only for the twelfth century Vīraśaiva leaders, but even for their successors in the fifteenth century. It is remarkable that the washerman's spirituality is closely connected in the texts with his occupation. There are in the Śūnyasampādane two more low-caste devotees who are spiritually characterized by their labour: Āyidakki Mārayya and Nuliya Candayya. Their stories will be discussed in the following chapter. So far we conclude that some of the low-caste saints are still honoured by the authors of the Śūnyasampādane in the fifteenth century. Particularly those saints whose degraded occupations can be interpreted in a mystical way find a place in the authoritative compilation. The washerman is a good example: washing and bleaching make good sense in spiritual language, as his own poems show. That phenomenon especially attracted the fifteenth century authors. They were ultimately more interested in washerman mystics than in the social position of contemporary washermen.

The Fifteenth Century - Siddhaliṅgēśvara

Another important source for the knowledge of fifteenth century Vīraśaivism is 'The Nectar of the Essential Knowledge of the Six Phases' (Ṣaṭsthalajñānasārāmṛta) which was written by Śrī Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara. It is a collection of vacanas, mostly of a philosophical character. The author was a famous ascetic who exercised great influence on the monastic organization of the Vīraśaivas.

Siddhaliṅgēśvara's vacanas do not deal frequently with social topics; because his foremost interest is the exposition of doctrine. In the literature of the founding period this was inextricably bound up with notions of the equality of all devotees and the danger of worldly prejudices. But these egalitarian ideas are conspicuously absent in the vacanas of Siddhaliṅgēśvara. Even in the numerous vacanas that are classified under the first two phases, bhaktasthala and māhēśvarasthala, we find no trace of the social implications that were abundantly expressed in the twelfth century vacanas of these categories. For Siddhaliṅgēśvara, devotion does not involve the levelling of human barriers; and the function of the liṅga is not to remove pollution. When he refers to social circumstances, he tends to negate the ideals of early Vīraśaivism. A good example is his only text about caste, an admonition to take the rules of purity seriously.

Guruprasādakke hēsuvaru,
liṅgaprasādakke hēsuvaru,
jaṅgamaprasādakke hēsuvaru,
bhaktaprasādakke hēsuvaru;
holati mādigitti ballavaḷādare,
halavupariyalli avaḷeñjala tinutipparu nōḍā jaga.
Hadineṇṭujātiya eñjala hēhavillade timba
bhavajātigaḷige Śivaprasāda dorakombude?
Dorakoḷḷadu.
Adēnukāraṇavendaḍe:
bhavabhavadalli yōnicakradalli tiruguttipparāgi.
Ī aśuddhajīvigaḷige śuddhavaha Śivaprasādadalli
sambandha samaṇisadu nōḍā,
Mahāliṅgaguru Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[81]

They feel aversion to the gift of the teacher,
they feel aversion to the gift of the liṅga,
they feel aversion to the gift of the monk,
they feel aversion to the gift of the devotee;
but when a low-caste bitch becomes rich,
look, they will eat her leftovers on many occasions.
Can the gift of Śiva be obtained by worldlings
who eat without aversion the leftovers of the eighteen castes?
No, it cannot be obtained by them.
This is the reason:
they are turning round on the wheel of wombs,
birth after birth.
Look, such impure beings are not fit to have contact
with the pure gift of Śiva,
O Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord!

Siddhaliṅgēśvara criticizes people who refuse to take part in the religious ceremonies in which the gift of grace (prasāda) is shared. Especially gifts of food are meant in this verse: such as the food given by the teacher, the guru, to his pupils. Also food offered to Śiva in the form of the liṅga could be shared among the worshippers. And a religious mendicant, a jaṅgama, was honoured by gifts of food that were blessed by him and given to the devotees. Finally, the gift of food made by one devotee to the others is mentioned. Apparently there were people who did not value these sacred gifts. In the poem they are criticized because of their impious behaviour. They had an aversion to the sacred gifts of food; but, according to Siddhaliṅgēśvara, they were not at all scrupulous about food in a secular context. Here the text becomes very interesting for our subject; because the poet describes the lax attitude of his adversaries with an example regarding caste rules. They did not hesitate to take food from the hands of the lowest and impurest woman if she had something to offer. So far the poem criticizes hypocrisy: you cannot despise the sacred food and accept impure food. Then the poet reverses his argument: people who are thus behaving have lost the right to partake in the holy ceremony. The cause of their unworthiness is again found in their morality concerning caste. They are called worldlings (literally 'of worldly caste'): and this appears from the fact that they

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81. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 231 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 139).

feel no compunction about taking food from other castes. According to an old classification there were eighteen castes (jāti), and the fault of these people is that they take food without any embarrassment from all the eighteen castes. For Siddhaliṅgēśvara this is the proof that their life is completely under the spell of bad merit from previous lives; they are not yet able to escape from the cycle of rebirths. It is obvious that Siddhaliṅgēśvara is not at all in favour of caste interdining. For him it has even become a reason for excommunication: those who do not follow the strict rules of caste purity have no right to divine communion. The egalitarian ideals of Basava and the other twelfth century saints seem to have been completely forgotten.

However, there were other circles which kept the old idealism alive. The highly institutionalized monastic milieu of Siddhaliṅgēśvara was not inclined to esteem the revolutionary experiments of the initial period of Vīraśaivism; but that does not imply that Bassava's heritage did not survive the fifteenth century. A more populistic Vīraśaiva tradition was still faithful to the ideals of the founder. We find a clear evidence in the verses of the poet who is usually called after his devotional signature Sarvajña. He lived most probably in the sixteenth century. He roamed all over the Kannaḍa country as a Vīraśaiva mendicant, but he does not seem to have been connected with one of the official monastic organizations. He wrote numerous little poems, usually in the tripadi metre. These are triplets with twenty measures in the first line, eighteen in the second line, and thirteen in the third line (every consonant, initial vowel and long vowel counts for one measure); whilst the second consonant of each line is identical. Among his verses we find many texts about caste that bear a surprising resemblance to Basava's vacanas, as can be illustrated by the following two stanzas.

Naḍevudondē bhūmi kuḍivudondē nīru
suḍuvagniyonde irutiralu kulagōtra
naḍuve ettaṇadu? Sarvajña.[82]

There is one earth we walk on, one water we drink,
one fire we burn. From where is the difference
of background and family? *O All-knowing Lord!*

Sattuda timbātanettaṇa holeyanu
etti jīvaduda koraḷaridu timbāta-
nuttamada holeya. Sarvajña.[83]

How can the man who eats carrion be called an untouchable?
The most untouchable is he who lives
by cutting the throat of living beings. *O All-knowing Lord!*

Sarvajña rejects, like Basava, all distinctions between human beings on the basis of caste and birth. His argument is that life is characterized by oneness. People who share the same earth with the same elements have no right to and no excuse for feelings of superiority. The poet criticizes likewise the traditional concepts of untouchability. Not birth

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82. SARVAJÑA, in: N.C. SARGANT, *The Lingayats*, Bangalore, 1963, pp. 21-22 (cf. NAIKAR, p. 52; K.B. PRABHU PRASAD, *Sarvajna*, New Delhi, 1987, p. 38); could be compared with BASAVA, 878; see page 27.
83. SARVAJÑA, 537 (cf. PRABHU PRASAD, *Sarvajna*, p. 50). This verse reminds us, of course, of BASAVA's famous vacana no. 590; see page 56.

in a caste that is known for eating carrion, but killing living beings makes a person untouchable. With these definite convictions Sarvajña places himself undeniably in the tradition of early Vīraśaivism.

The Fifteenth Century - Concluding Remarks

The material from the fifteenth century reveals a certain deviation from the initial Vīraśaiva views with regard to caste. The authoritative Śūnyasaṃpādane shows that the revolutionary social ethics of the first period is no longer part of the religion as taught by the leaders. Among the one and a half thousand old vacanas there is not a single one in which the concept of caste is treated, and certainly no egalitarian ideas are expressed. However, there are in the book several reminiscences of the open community at Kalyāṇa in the twelfth century. A number of low-caste saints from the founding period is still revered, although their social position is not stressed. It is still acknowledged that low-caste men and women could reach the highest mystical union in the early Vīraśaiva movement. The compilers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane even show a curious interest in the peculiar mystics of the low-caste saints; but in the narrative those people are usually not on a par with the high-caste devotees as the story about Haḍapada Appaṇṇa and Allama shows. One low-caste saint, however, stands out in the Śūnyasaṃpādane. The ninth chapter of the book gives an elaborate picture of the mystics of Maḍivāḷa Mācayya, the washerman. He is tested by Allama, but he answers the critical questions with a remarkable authority. A profound allegorical vacana of the washerman illustrates his mystical qualities; and the conclusion is that Mācayya attained the same spritual level as the three great saints of the Śūnyasaṃpādane: Basava, Cannabasava, and Allama. At least the spirituality of the washerman received recognition; but the revolutionary zeal of the Kalyāṇa community is absent in the Śūnyasaṃpādane.

The vacanas of Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara are also important for our knowledge of fifteenth century Vīraśaivism. It is remarkable that this source too devoted minimal attention to the social implications of the Vīraśaiva spirituality that were so predominant in the initial stage of the movement. Siddhaliṅgēśvara even seems to fall back on classical notions of purity with regard to caste. His only vacana that deals explicitly with caste distinctions gives no room for an egalitarian conviction as expressed by Basava and his fellow śaraṇas. Siddhaliṅgēśvara seems to be an exponent of the trend in Vīraśaiva history which restored the orthodox Brāhmaṇa values concerning caste.

We may conclude that the mainstream of Vīraśaivism in the fifteenth century did not retain the revolutionary view on caste that was characteristic of the beginning of the movement. Nevertheless, there must still have been an undercurrent of social idealism dating back to the early Vīraśaiva saints, for in the sixteenth century Sarvajña proves to be quite aware of the old social ethics of Vīraśaivism and he takes over several of Basava's revolutionary ideas on caste. This idealism was probably almost extinct in the organizations of the Vīraśaiva establishment; but it could still flourish in the subculture of mendicants and their audience of common people.

The Colonial Period - Liṅgāyatas as a Caste

Now we turn to the colonial period. A new source for the knowledge of Vīraśaivism originated in the nineteenth century. European travellers, civil servants, and missionaries penetrated into almost all regions of the Kannaḍa country. Many ethnographic accounts and treatises gave a picture of the culture and religion of the country. A number of them devoted considerable attention to the life of the Vīraśaivas, or Liṅgāyatas as they are commonly called in this period. Of course, we must realize that this material is different in kind from the texts of earlier centuries which were discussed above. The ethnographic records give us a picture of the practice of Vīraśaivism; whilst the vacanas of the twelfth and fifteenth century were the expression of both mystical experience and religious ideas. But the difference should not be stressed too much; because the vacanas contained a very practical kind of religious teaching and consequently give us an insight into the life of the community as well. And the ethnographic writers often try to reveal the theoretical background of the observed cultural phenomena. Moreover, in the colonial period there is no longer any religious literature comparable with the vacanas. Another type of sacred writing had come up during the ages and the old vacanas were almost forgotten. The classical vacana literature had embodied practical instruction; but the sacred books of later times were not generally concerned with social and moral questions. In the nineteenth century, the sacred books of the Liṅgāyatas were philosophical and hagiographical works among which the Basavapurāṇa and the Cannabasavapurāṇa were considered to be the most authoritative. These books do provide hardly any data for our present research; because they deal mainly with pious traditions about the Vīraśaiva saints and their miracles. As a result, our main source in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century is the ethnographic material. It contains considerable information about social life in the Liṅgāyata community.

The first important author is the French missionary the Abbé J.A. Dubois. He started his extensive travels throughout Southern India in 1792. Almost thirty years later, in 1821, he finished the manuscript of his famous book 'Moeurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde' (Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies). The Abbé was mainly interested in the Brāhmaṇa tradition, but he also gives information about the religion of the lower castes and in this connection he describes the Liṅgāyatas.[84] According to Dubois, Hindus have generally an equal veneration for the two main deities: Viṣṇu and Śiva. There are, however, a large number of 'sectarians' among the Śūdras, the fourth and lowest category in the caste system of the varṇas. He distinguishes two great sects among them: the Viṣṇnubhaktas and the Śivabhaktas. The latter are also called Liṅgadhāris or Liṅgāyatas. Apparently Dubois takes the term Liṅgāyata in a broad sense: comprising all non-Brāhmaṇa worshippers of Śiva under that name. Consequently, it is not surprising that he describes the Vīraśaivas as a sect amongst the Liṅgāyatas. His information about this Vīraśaiva sect is quite congruent with the original teachings of Basava and the other early saints. The Abbé also reports that the Vīraśaivas reject all caste distinctions. Even untouchables can join the sect and they are not regarded as lower than Brāhmaṇas; because the liṅga makes all men equal. In this connection, Dubois writes: 'The Pariah's humble hut containing this sacred emblem is far above the most magnificent palace where it is not', which seems to be influenced by Basava's vacanas.[85] However, his information about the Vīraśaivas proper is scarce and it is still unclear whether he observed them himself or only transmitted some second-hand information about their doctrines. Dubois describes the Liṅgāyatas in general as a sect to which people do not belong by birth but on the basis of their own choice; but he admits that children usually follow the religion of their fathers. According to his observations, the Viṣṇubhaktas and the Śivabhaktas were competing strongly with each other; but adherents could easily change from one sect to the other. Even marriages between members of the two sects are said to occur without any problem: 'Sometimes the husband is a Vishnavite and bears the namam on his forehead, while the wife is a follower of Siva and wears the lingam. (...) This divergence of religious opinion, however, in no way destroys the peace of the household.'[86] It must be questioned whether Dubois is right in this rosy picture of Hindu ecumenism; because both earlier and later writers give quite another impression.[87] Perhaps his Brāhmaṇa informants would have him believe that those low-caste people did not take religion very seriously. For one thing is clear in the Abbé's account: that the Liṅgāyatas occupied a distinct, rather low, place in the caste hierarchy and were accordingly despised by the Brāhmaṇas. The Liṅgāyata 'sect' consisted, according to Dubois, of people from the upper classes of the Śūdra category. This suggests that the movement had developed to some extent into a caste and was consequently classified in the caste system.

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[84] J.A. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Delhi, 1985 [manuscript 1821], pp. 111-123.

Other nineteenth century authors confirm that the Liṅgāyatas formed a sort of caste amidst the other Hindu castes. The first detailed sketch of the Liṅgāyatas was produced by C.P. Brown, a British civil servant. He describes them as a closed community which does not permit eating with outsiders, because the latter do not bless their food in the name of Basava and are thus heathens.[88] Although the Liṅgāyata movement was originally open to everybody, Brown reports that conversions had become very rare. The reason is said to be that the teachers insisted on a probation time of ten to twelve years, which scared possible candidates off. The highest section of the Liṅgāyatas, the semi-Brāhmaṇa Ārādhyas, even refused admittance to all outsiders.[89] Arthur Steele, who recorded the caste laws at Poona at the beginning of the nineteenth century, gives a similar picture of the Liṅgāyatas as a closed community. He reports a very severe penalty in the community for eating and residing with Muslims or the untouchable caste of Mahārs: the offender lost his membership of the Liṅgāyata caste for ever. Conversions were rare in Poona as well; sometimes people from other castes were adopted after purification as servants or disciples.[90]

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[85] DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, [1821], p. 117. Cf. BASAVA, 607; see page 31.

[86] DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, [1821], p. 119.

[87] An interesting account of an earlier author can be found in a work of the Danish missionary Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg about religion in Southern India: 'These two main sects are very antagonistic. (...) They are cursing each other and they do not like to admit that a member of one sect could marry with one from the other sect. When this happens, then the woman has to adopt that religion which the husband adheres to, since generally there is among them and their friends strife and quarrels because of religion.' ZIEGENBALG, *Malabarisches Heidenthum*, Amsterdam, 1926 [manuscript 1711], p. 24. For later reports see the information from the District Gazetteers and other nineteenth century sources hereafter.

[88] C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 147.

The distinction made by Dubois between Vīraśaivas and Liṅgāyatas in general cannot be found in any other publication and must be regarded as a theoretical construction with little practical value. Actually, there existed a very large class of people who were called Liṅgāyatas, spread over the whole of Southern India. They had one thing in common: the wearing of the personal liṅga on the body; according to the custom propagated by Basava. For the rest, they varied greatly in doctrine, ethic, and custom. The influence of the twelfth century Vīraśaiva movement was felt most among the Liṅgāyatas in present Karnataka; but in other regions the influence of other schools of thought was equally important or even dominant. Our further investigation will be mainly confined to the Liṅgāyatas of the motherland, Karnataka.

Here, it struck travellers particularly that the practice of Liṅgāyata life differed so much from the original teachings concerning caste. A typical formulation is given by the inspector of the Basler Mission Josenhans after his visitation in 1851-'52: 'While they tried to abolish the caste classification and fought it in every way, even tried to give their religious system not only a more universal character but also universal supremacy, it proved, however, in the course of time to be incapable of reaching that goal, and now it has even become a new caste, albeit certainly a mighty one.'[91] The Liṅgāyatas formed a mighty caste indeed in the Kannaḍa country; but that does not imply that they were classified very high in the Hindu order of castes. Although the classification was not universal, and the ranking of some groups might have been somewhat different in the various regions, the Liṅgāyatas were generally regarded as a kind of Śūdras. Since they did not practise an orthodox initiation, they could not be classified under the higher 'twice-born' categories in the opinion of the Brāhmaṇas. The Liṅgāyatas themselves often refused to be classified as low as Śūdras. The usual argument of the Brāhmaṇas was that, if they refused to be Śūdras, they must belong to the untouchables (avarṇas); because they had certainly not the right to a higher status than that of Śūdra. Sometimes Liṅgāyatas accepted the Śūdra status just to escape the terrible insult of being designated as untouchables.[92] The question of the Śūdra status became particularly crucial in the field of law and politics. The British administration undertook a legal uniformization in the territories under its control; starting in 1860. Every caste had to be classified in the varṇa system in order to decide which rules were applicable concerning family law and religious privileges. In 1879, the Bombay High Court declared that the Liṅgāyatas were Śūdras: which caused severe agitation among them.[93] Their feelings were all the more sensitive on this point since they were just developing a new self-confidence. Like many communities, the Liṅgāyatas began to stress the distinctive features of their own culture in colonial society. They took advantage of the new possibilities of communication provided by main roads, railways, postal services, and printing facilities.[94] Under the new circumstances, caste was no longer a regional entity, but also acquired larger significance. Gradually, the elite succeeded in organizing liṅga-wearers from all over Southern India into a well-defined caste. This was quite in line with the ideas of the government which tried, by means of census, to classify the whole population in a convenient arrangement of hierarchically ranked castes. The census policy certainly furthered the unity and the self-awareness of several larger communities, including the Liṅgāyatas. According to the census officials, everybody must belong to one of the larger communities. The result was that local and regional caste distinctions lost their importance. Many small liṅga-wearing groups, which so far felt hardiy any alliance to the organized Liṅgāyata tradition, obtained a new identity as members of a statewide 'Liṅgāyata caste'. In this caste-building process, a designation as Śūdras was, of course, most unwelcome to the emancipating Liṅgāyatas. Therefore, they protested vehemently when the censuses of 1891 intended to classify them as Hindus of the fourth category, Śūdras. Several Liṅgāyata pressure groups claimed to be not less than 'Vīraśaiva Brāhmaṇas'! The activities of such groups were particularly strong in the southern part of the Kannaḍa-speaking districts which belonged to the Princely State of Mysore. Here, a deputation visited even the Mahārāja in order to prevent the humiliating classification of Śūdra. The princely government gave in to their objections partly by classifying them under the names of their subdivisions without stressing the Śūdra status; but the designation 'Vīraśaiva Brāhmaṇa' was only permitted for private use. The other castes were not very impressed by their claims and, in Mysore, they took revenge when the Liṅgāyatas there asked for permission for their usual procession with a particular banner with a bull on it (the nandidhvaja). Parading with this banner was the custom of a certain group of lower castes, called 'right-hand castes', and the reasoning of the opponents was that, if the Liṅgāyatas wanted to be Brāhmaṇas, they lost all privileges belonging to their former status among the right-hand castes.[95] Then the Liṅgāyatas were only too eager to regain their old position in the caste classification. However, the next census in 1901 gave rise to new actions by Liṅgāyata committees. Now, they even presented a plan which classified the Liṅgāyata community analogously to the orthodox Hindu sections in 'Vīraśaiva Brāhmaṇas', 'Vīraśaiva Kṣatriyas', 'Vīraśaiva Vaiśyas', and 'Vīraśaiva Śūdras'. If it appeared to be impossible to attain a high place in the Hindu classification, then a complete parallel classification could also be very attractive! The authorities were not at all inclined to comply with such a drastic requirement.[96]

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[89] BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', 1840, pp. 174, 150. The long periods of probation are for the first time mentioned by CANNABASAVA: three years for a Brāhmaṇa, six years for a Kṣatriya, nine years for a Vaiśya, and twelve years for a Śūdra; see pages 42-43. The rule is confirmed in an authorative work of 1585: VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA's *Cannabasava-purāṇa* LIX (trl. p. 211). It is, however, doubtful, whether these probation rules were always actually enforced and thus formed a real hindrance to proselytism. See also Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, p. 267.

[90] Arthur STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, Delhi, 1986 [first ed. 1826], pp. 149-150.

[91] JOSENHANS, 'Die ostindische Visitationsreise des Inspector Josenhans im Jahr 1851-1852', *Magazin f.d. neueste Gesch. d. ev. Missions- und Bibel-Gesellschaften*, 1854, 2. Heft, p. 138.

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[92] Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, p. 236.

[93] R.C. ARTAL, 'A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith', *The Journal of the Anthrop. Soc. of Bombay*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1909, p. 252; William McCORMACK, 'Lingayats as a Sect', *The Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Inst. of Gr.Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 93, 1963, p. 68.

[94] M.N. SRINIVAS, *Caste in Modern India*, Bombay, 1985, p. 16.

Partly as a result of the troubles with the censuses, the Liṅgāyata elite made serious endeavours to improve the prestige of the community. In 1904, the All-India Vīraśaiva Mahāsabhā was founded: an organization for the promotion of the interests of all Liṅgāyatas. One of the initiatives of the Mahāsabhā, in 1908, was the establishment of a central training institute for priests, the Śivayōgamandira at Pattadakal (Bijapur District). The inspirator of both the Mahāsabhā and the Śivayōgimandira was a monastic leader, Śrī Kumārasvāmīji of Hanagal, who is still held in great esteem among the Liṅgāyatas.[97] The Mahāsabhā played an important role in the emancipation process of the Liṅgāyata caste. The leaders claimed a glorious place for their community in the history of India and they usually tried to demonstrate that the lofty Vīraśaiva tradition was closely connected with the most orthodox Sanskrit schools of philosophy. In this view not much importance was attached to Basava and his twelfth century revolution; but, rather, Vīraśaivism was claimed to date back to the earliest phases of history. Of course, the adherents of such an orthodox and time-honoured religion could not be Śūdras. One of the foremost leaders, K.P. Puttanna Chetty, openly declared in a salient speech that the Liṅgāyata ritual of initiation (liṅgadīkṣe) had the same value as the Brāhmaṇa initiation and made people twice-born: 'Every man and woman has to go through the Diksha ceremony and is thus re-born a Dwija.'[98] The stress on both sexes is remarkable, since the orthodox Hindu twice-born do not practise an initiation for women. It suggests that the Liṅgāyata community is even more pure because all adult members are initiated. However, it should be noted that these considerations were not very realistic since the Liṅgāyata initiation was in practice confined to male members of the higher sections of the Liṅgāyata community and the claims on purity were not recognized by any outsider: in particular by the influential Brāhmaṇas.

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[95] More about the Liṅgāyatas and the 'right-hand castes' on page 81.

[96] THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, pp. 252-253; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. I, Part II: *History of the Konkan Dakhan and Southern Marátha Country*, Bombay, 1896, p. 478; R.E. ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, p. 351.

[97] See L.G. HIREMATH, *Shri Kumarashivayogi of Hanagal*, Hubli, 1972; Panchakshari HIREMATH, *Yugapurusha*, Hubli, 1979.

[98] K.P. PUTTANNA CHETTY in his Presidential Address at the eighth national conference in 1917, quoted from C. SUNDARĒŚAN, *Divān bahaddūr rājasabhā bhūṣaṇa Dr. Sir K.P. Puṭṭaṇṇaśeṭṭaru*, Gadag, 1978, p. 65.

The Liṅgāyata emancipatory movement was more successful in another field. It played a significant role in the so-called 'non-Brāhmaṇa movement' which was especially strong in the Princely State of Mysore.[99] There the Liṅgāyatas founded the Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association (M.L.E.F.A.) in 1905. This organization aimed primarily at the stimulation of education among the Liṅgāyatas by establishing student hostels and awarding scholarships. But the M.L.E.F.A. was more than an educational society. It was also the major representative body of the Liṅgāyatas in politics. One of the controversial issues in Mysore politics was the distribution of government jobs amongst the various castes. In spite of government declarations of intent to favour all castes, there was still an absolute predominance of the Brāhmaṇas, together with the British and Anglo-Indians. The background was that only Brāhmaṇas had the advantage of the required English education, and so it was not only a question of employment policy but a problem of educational facilities as well. The larger non-Brāhmaṇa communities, particularly the Liṅgāyatas, the Muslims and the agricultural category of Okkaligas, raised their voices increasingly against the unjust situation.[100] Their communal organizations, including the M.L.E.F.A., joined together in the Prajā Mitra Maṇḍali (People's Friendship Association). A deputation from this active lobby called on the Mahārāja in June 1918. The mission was a great success. The government set up the 'Committee Appointed to Consider Steps Necessary for the Adequate Representation of Backward Communities in the Public Service', informally called the 'Miller Committee' after its president Sir Leslie Miller. The committee proposed a number of measures to meet the requests of the non-

[99] The movement is described masterly by Lelah DUSHKIN in her Ph.D.-dissertation *The NonBrahman Movement in Princely Mysore*, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1974. See also: James MANOR, *Political Change in an Indian State*, New Delhi, 1977; James MANOR, 'The Evolution of Political Arenas and Units of Social Organisations', in: M.N. Srinivas e.a. [eds], *Dimensions of Social Change in India*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 169-187; S. CHANDRASEKHAR, *Dimensions of Socio-Political Change in Mysore 1918-40*, New Delhi, 1985; David ARNOLD, Robin JEFFREY, James MANOR, 'Caste Associations in South India', *IESHR*, Vol. XIII, 1976, pp. 353-373; Arun P. BALI, 'The Virasaiva Movements', in: S.C. Malik [ed], *Indian Movements*, Simla, 1978, pp. 67-100.

[100] The Okkaligas (also called Vakkaligas) were originally not a caste. The census officials in Mysore used the name as a catch-all category for all agricultural groups that did not belong to one of the recognized larger communities. Because of this census policy, however, the Okkaligas became more and more a single caste in the general opinion. They were the numerically dominant community: according to the 1921 census they accounted for 21.66% of the total population of 5,978,892 (Liṅgāyatas 11.95%, Holeyas 10.88%, Kurubas 6.71%, Muslims 5,69%, Mādigas 4,70%, Bēḍas 4.54%, Brāhmaṇas 3,61%, minor communities together 30.26%).

Brāhmaṇa communities. In 1921, most of the measures were made effective by a government order. Positive discrimination of backward communities was to be government policy during the next seven years, so that ultimately fifty percent of government jobs should be in their hands. The only criterion for backwardness was a low level of English literacy; and consequently, the government regarded as backward all castes and communities except the Brāhmaṇas and those whose mother tongue was English. Actually, a great number of government posts was allotted to non-Brāhmaṇas during the next years, although their share in the higher, 'gazetted' ranks remained almost negligible.[101] Educational measures included an extended system of scholarships for the non-Brāhmaṇa communities and also substantial support for student hostels. Many non-Brāhmaṇa students took advantage of the new policy; but the educational facilities were still insufficient. However, the greatest result of the non-Brāhmaṇa movement was that the monopoly position of the Brāhmaṇas in government service was severely attacked and, above all, that the non-Brāhmaṇa communities had gained a considerable prestige in that struggle. The Liṅgāyatas played a major role in the movement. So they were subsequently regarded as a powerful caste which could not be ignored in politics.

Although the Liṅgāyatas received a certain recognition in the political field, their religious status remained unclear. Their claims to a high position in the Hindu classification were never successful; nor was the outer world much impressed by the seemingly orthodox Sanskrit tradition they presented. In the second decade of the twentieth century, we find that the Liṅgāyatas were gradually more inclined to deny any allegiance to the orthodox Hindu lore. Now that they were apparently not recognized as high-caste Hindus, they tended to stress their own socio-religious system alongside Hindu orthodoxy or even opposed to Hinduism. The question arose in the community whether they were Hindus at all; and some leaders insisted on an official recognition as a distinct religion like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and Jainism.[102] Instead of the former focusing on the Vīraśaiva Sanskrit tradition, a new orientation towards their own Kannaḍa heritage arose. Basava was honoured again, not always as the founder, but at least as the reviver of the Liṅgāyata religion. His anti-Brāhmaṇa standpoint, in the preceding age mostly withheld out of shame, was again defended as a necessary and honourable reaction to the circumstances of his time. The vacana literature was rediscovered, mainly because of the enormous efforts of P.G. Halakatti. He collected the manuscripts of the almost forgotten vacanas from all over the Kannaḍa-speaking country. His editions of the vacanas created a new awareness of the own tradition. However, not all Liṅgāyatas were in favour of the new orientation. Particularly those who were connected with the five 'pontifical seats' of the pañcācāryas preferred the Sanskrit tradition to the Basava trend. Notably Paṇḍita Kāśinātha Śāstri and his publishing company 'The Panchacharya Electric Press' in Mysore set up an active countermovement. The Liṅgāyatas might present themselves as a caste; but it became clear again that they certainly did not form a unity. Actually, they had never been a single, uniform community; but, in order to find the background of that phenomenon, we have to turn back to the beginning of the colonial period.

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[101] The higher posts in the government service are called gazetted, because they are notified in the official gazette.

[102] The question even attracted the attention in Europe. Helmuth von GLASENAPP wrote an article about it in a Berlin periodical under his pen name Anandavardhan SHASTRI, 'Die Frage einer Sondervertretung der Lingayats', *Neue Orient*, Bd. 3, Lief. 3, 1918, pp. 135-138. He suggests that the controversy was caused deliberately by the British colonial policy of divide and rule. The article was written in the last year of the Great War, which might explain its unjustified anti-British standpoint.

The Colonial Period - Liṅgāyatas as a Conglomeration of Castes

In the years 1800 and 1801, Francis Buchanan travelled through the Kannaḍa countries under the authority of the British Governor General in order to inspect the new territories which had come under British influence after the defeat of Ṭīpu Sultāna in the previous year. In his elaborate journal he describes not only the natural environment, agriculture, and commerce, but also the culture of the various communities of the population. Buchanan became acquainted with the Liṅgāyatas during his stay in Bangalore. He describes a certain caste named Pañcama Baṇajiga, of which he reports that they 'are by the Mussulmans called Lingait, as being the chief persons of the sect, who wear, round their necks, a silver box containing an image of Siva in shape of the Linga, under which form only he is ever worshipped. From this circumstance they are also called Sivabhactaru, and Lingabuntaru; but in this country there are many other low casts, who wear the same badge of religion.'[103] Furthermore, he notes that people from this sect who wish to devote their lives to the divine service are called jaṅgamas. Every member of the caste who is qualified by education and behaviour can become a jaṅgama. The children of the jaṅgamas, however, never take up ordinary professions anymore, but remain religious specialists.[104] Here we see the birth of the later distinct caste of the hereditary priests: the Jaṅgamas!

Buchanan mentions in his travel accounts a number of castes that wear the liṅga or are otherwise associated with Vīraśaivism. Some data about these castes are summed up in the following table, such as the castes from which they choose their brides and in whose houses they take food.

Castes associated with Vīraśaivism according to
Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807

name (Buchanans spelling parenthesized)	subdivisions	marriage	dining	various
1.Pañcama Baṇajiga (Pancham Banijigaru)	several	within sub-division	all sub-divisions + 16.	all can becom jaṅgama

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[103] Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, p. 236 (Śiva-bhaktaru = devotees of Śiva; liṅgavantaru = liṅga-wearers).

[104] BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, 1807, Vol. I, p. 238.

2.Jaina Baṇajiga (Jaina Banijigaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	within sub-division		converts from Jainism; cannot become jaṅgama
3.Karṇāṭa Dēvāṅga (Karnata Dévángas)	a.liṅgawearing b..Śaiva, but no liṅga c..Vaiṣṇava	a.within sub-division b.not with 4.	a.within sub-division b.also with a. and with 4.	a.own jaṅgamas b.Liṅgāyata guru c.in Coimbatore; formerly liṅga-wearing
4.Telugu Dēvāṅga (Teliga Dévángas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	within whole caste	not with 3.	also called Jāḍa (Jadar) b.Liṅgāyata guru
5.Sēṇigāra (Shaynagaru)	a.jaṅgamas b.laymen	within sub-division	also with 1.	
6.Pañcāḷa (Panchálas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	within whole caste	within whole caste	
7.Jyōtiphaṇada Gāṇiga (Jotyphanada Ganagaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	within sub-division	within subdi-dision,in some regions with all liṅga-wearers	sometimes called Heggāṇiga (Hegganigaru)
8.Sāle (Shalay)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	within sub-division	a.also with 1.	Telugu origin; b.formerly also liṅgawearing
9.Pākanāḍi Jōgi (Pacanat Jogies)		with all		no liṅga; revere guru Śrīśaila
10.Golla (Gollaru)		within caste		no liṅga; a Liṅgāyata as guru but also services from Brāhmaṇas
11.Kuñca Okkaliga (Cunsa Woculigaru)	a.Śaiva, but no liṅga b.Vaiṣṇava	within whole caste		a. a Liṅgāyata as guru
12.Lālagoṇḍa (Lali-Gundaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	not with 1.	item	a.claim to be 1.
13.Bhēri (Bheri)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	within sub-division	item	a.wear liṅga + holy thread b.partly subject to Liṅgāyata guru
14.Kuruba (Curubas)	a.Haṇḍe Kuruba (Handy Curubaru) b.Kuruba (Curubaru proper)	within sub-division	item	do not wear liṅga, but have Liṅgāyata gurus

15.Biḷīmagga (Bily-Mugga)		within caste	with all Baṇajigas	claim to be Baṇajiga; all ca become jaṅgam
16.Pañcama Kumbāra (Panchama Cumbharu		within caste	also with 1.	
17.Gaṅgaḍikāra Okkaliga (Gangricara Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	within caste	a.with 1.,11., 18.,19.	
18.Sādaru Okkaliga (Sadru Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava d.Jaina	within whole caste	a.with 1.,11., 17.,19.	
19.Noṇaba Okkaliga (Nona Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	within whole caste	a.with 1.,11., 17.,18.	
20.Śivācārya Okkaliga (Siv' Achárya Woculigas)		within caste		all can become jaṅgama
21.Reḍḍi (Ruddy)	a.Śaiva, but no liṅga b.Vaiṣṇava	within whole caste		a.Liṅgāyata guru

The data supplied by Buchanan are not very suitable for classification in such a table, for there are, of course, regional differences and the author is not able to give the same kind of information for every caste. But we get at least some impression of the enormous diversity of the groups that are, to some extent, under the influence of Vīraśaivism. It appears that there are many degrees in being Liṅgāyata. Some groups are eligible for the priesthood like the Pañcama Baṇajigas; and some claim to be so like the Biḷīmaggas. Others have their own priests, lower in rank, like the Karṇāṭa Dēvāṅgas and the Sēṇigāras. The priests of the latter even became a closed subcaste to which one belongs only by birthright. But there are also divisions which depend completely on the priesthood of others. Most groups wear the personal liṅga; but there are also some who are subject to a Liṅgāyata guru although they do not practise liṅga-wearing. Marriage alliances are mostly restricted to one's own group; but a schism between Vaiṣṇavas and Śaivas in one group is not always an impediment. The same is the case with commensality, although liṅga-wearers of different groups sometimes accept food from each other. Apparently, there is not one Liṅgāyata caste, but only a conglomeration of castes which are, sometimes only in part, more or less connected with the Vīraśaiva doctrine and culture.

This strange phenomenon can be explained by the missionary practice of the Liṅgāyatas. Originally, the Vīraśaiva community was open to converts from all castes. Throughout the course of history, this liberal attitude towards even the lowest classes was always defended.[105] In the first period, individuals from all castes joined the movement and were accepted without restriction: thus losing their former caste identity. Later practice was that mainly groups of people from the same caste or even complete castes were converted. However, new members were not admitted as equals; and they remained organized in own castes within the Liṅgāyata fold. Besides, the conversion was not always radical: there were transitional stages. Some castes or caste groups only became gradually accustomed to the Liṅgāyata way of life. And other castes decided to take over only a part of the Vīraśaiva culture, or were not allowed to share in all the sacramental prerogatives of the earlier converts. In particular, the right to wear the personal liṅga was restricted to those castes which did not take meat or spirits.

It was this conglomeration of real Liṅgāyatas, distinguishable converts, and partly converted groups that Buchanan described during his travels through the southern part of present Karnataka. The Pañcama Baṇajigas formed the community of the original converts from the twelfth century. They were the undisputed leaders of all Liṅgāyatas and also the leaders of all the so-called 'right-hand castes'.[106] In this part of the country, a strict distinction was made between 'right-hand castes' (balagey) and left-hand castes (eḍagey) with respect to all castes that did not belong to the Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya categories. The right-hand castes had some ceremonial privileges, although certainly not all castes of this category were higher in rank than all left-hand castes. The leaders of the left-hand side, and consequently strong adversaries of the Pañcama Baṇajigas, were the Pañcāḷas. Liṅga-wearing was also practised in a part of their community, but they did not associate with the other liṅga-wearers. Likewise, a number of other castes were only in part converted to Vīraśaivism and had retained greater or smaller sections of worshippers of Viṣṇu. Within such a caste, the two sections could usually eat together, sometimes even intermarry. In some cases, the Liṅgāyata sections of these castes also took food in the houses of other liṅga-wearers. The system was not at all static: not only did new castes or sections of castes join the fold, but other castes or groups turned away gradually or at once. So a section of the Karṇāṭa Dēvāṅgas settled in the regions of Coimbatore (in present Tamilnadu), came under the influence of the dominant religion there and became Vaiṣṇava.[107] One part of the Sēṇigāra caste, which used to be Liṅgāyata in its entirety, broke off after an incident. According to their story, a house in the community was possessed by a devil; and prayers to Śiva were of no avail. Then ten persons put off their liṅgas and called for Viṣṇu's help. The devil was driven out; and many Sēṇigāras were convinced of the god's superiority and joined the Vaiṣṇavas.[108]

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[105] We find this attitude very clearly in the *Śivādhikyapurāṇa* (1611), see: Edward P. RICE, *A History of Kanarese Literature*, Calcutta, 1921, p. 94.

[106] Therefore, it is difficult to believe that the Vīraśaiva movement of the twelfth century was mainly a left-hand castes' affair, as was stated lately by Velcheru NARAYANA RAO in the introduction to his translation of SŌMANĀTHA's *Basavapurāṇamu: Śiva's Warriors*, Princeton, 1990, pp. 9-10. For the history of the distinction between right- hand and left-hand castes see the article 'Right and Left Hand Castes (*valaṅgai* and *iḍaṅgai*)' in: Burton STEIN, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1980, pp. 173-215. It should be noted that the name Pañcama Baṇajiga has nothing to do with the term pañcama as used, in the twentieth century, for untouchables in Mysore.

[107] BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, 1807, Vol. II, pp. 242-243.

We see that the castes within the Liṅgāyata community fall into different categories. In the ethnographic reports, several classifications are suggested. The most useful arrangement seems to be the one elaborated by the authors of the District Gazetteer for Bijapur and Dharwar.[109] They divide the Liṅgāyata castes into three distinct categories. First, there are the original converts under the heading of True or Pure Liṅgāyatas. Then follow a number of occupational castes, probably converted later, which are indicated as Affiliated Liṅgāyatas. Finally, there are the so-called Half-Liṅgāyatas who do not share in all the religious ceremonies, mostly because of their impure way of life (meat, liquor). We reproduce the Gazetteer's essential data for the District of Bijapur here in a table, so that we can catch a glimpse of the situation of the Liṅgāyata community in another part of the Kannaḍa country.

Castes associated with Vīraśaivism in Bijapur District according to the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Bombay, 1884

name	subdivisions	marriage/eating	various
TRUE LIṄGĀYATAS			
1.Jaṅgama	a.Virakta b.Sāmānya c.Ganācāri d.Maṭhapati	a.celibates b.mainly endogamous; eat in all Liṅgāyata houses except nr 6. c-d intermarry; also marriages with girls from 3. and 4.	
2.Śīlavanta		eating from 1.	also called Cilimeyagni; can become Jaṅgama
3.Baṇajiga	a.Hoḷeyācebaḷaki b.Dhūḷapāvada c.Calageribaḷaki	intermarriage with 4. eating from 1.,2.	can become Jaṅgama
4.Pañcamasāli		marriage with 3.a.,c.	can become Jaṅgama

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[108] BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, 1807, Vol. I, pp. 255-256.

[109] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, pp. 102-108; Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, pp. 219-220.

AFFILIATED LIṄGĀYATAS			
5.Ārebaṇajiga			converted Marāṭas
6.Calavādi		not allowed to eat with true Liṅgāyatas, even in religious houses	converted Mahārs
7.Catura			
8.Gāṇiga	a.Kārekula b.Sajjana		also: Tēli; a.strict Liṅgāyata b.Brāhmaṇa customs (marriage)
9.Gavaḷi	a.Liṅgāyata b.Marāṭi	a.no food from b. b.take also food from 9.a. and 1.	
10.Haṇḍe Vajīra			also: Haṇḍe Kuruba; converted Kurubas
11.Haṇḍeyavaru		Jaṅgamas do not take their food	converted Kabbaligas
12.Kalāvanta			prostitutes
13.Koṣṭi	a.Biḷējāḍa b.Padasalagijāḍa	eating and marriage within subdivision	also: Nīlakaṇṭha Liṅgāyata
14.Kuḍavakkaliga	a.Daṇḍāvati b.Miṇigadika c.Taḍḍoḍi d.Yattiraka		
15.Kumbāra	a.Lāḍa b.Liṅgāyata c.Marāṭi d.Paradēśi e.Telugu	eating and marriage within subdivision	
16.Kurusāli	subdivisions acc. to original castes	eating and marriage withing subdivision	bastards from various castes
17.Kuruvinaseṭṭi		no eating or marriage with 24.	also: Hirē-Kuruvinavaru; earlier converted than 24
18.Mālegāra	12 subdivisions	eating and marriage within whole caste	
19.Nāgalika			
20.Nādiga	a.Liṅgāyata b.Marāṭi c.Rājapūta d.Sajjana	eating and marriage within subdivision	also: Nāvida

21.Nīligāra	none	eat from 13.,19. not from 14.,15.	
22.Padasāli			
23.Śivācāri			also: Liṅgāyata Haṭagāras
HALF-LIṄGĀYATAS			
24.Cikkakuruvinavaru			later converted than 17.
25.Ḍōra	none		
26.Gurava	none		also: Jīra or Hūgāra
27.Haṭagāra		no eating and marriage with 23.	also: Dēvāṅga or Kulācāradavaru Haṭagāra
28.Heḷava			also: Pāṅgala
29.Kabbēra	a.Bārikēra b.Kabbēra	marriage within whole caste; eating from several castes	
30.Parit			
31.Sāli	a.Padmasāli b.Sukusāli c.Sakkulasāli d.Dēvasāli e.Padasāli f.Samasāli g.Śuddhasāli	formerly intermariage and commensality of all subdivisions; now no intermarriage and only commensality of a. and b.	
32.Samagāra	a.Aresamagāra b.Liṅgada-Samagāra c.Mōcigāra	eating and marriage within subdivision	

These data suggest that the Liṅgāyata community in this particular district was even more splitted up than it was in the regions described by Buchanan. This is the motherland of Vīraśaivism (the birthplace of Basava is in this district) and here, the Liṅgāyatas have a strength of almost forty percent of the Hindu population. Their large number and dominant position is most probably one of the causes that they are so extremely compartmentalized. As the dominant community, they attract converts from all sides, and those new Liṅgāyatas must also find a place in the caste structure. It is also possible that there was a general tendency of further splitting up during the eighty years since Buchanan's records. Whatever the causes might be, the Liṅgāyata community of Bijapur District at the end of the nineteenth century is a classic example of a very refined caste structure. The first and highest category is formed by the 'True Liṅgāyatas' who are apparently the descendants of the original Vīraśaiva movement. They are divided into four castes which are, however, not completely closed. There is some commensality and even intermarriage; but the hierarchy is apparent. The lower castes will take food from the higher ones but not vice versa. The 'True Liṅgāyata' castes are hypergamous: the higher ranks can take girls from lower ranks but they do not give their own daughters to men of lower status. The hierarchy is based on purity. The Pañcamasālis constitute the majority of this category. The higher sections originally belonged to them as well; but they distinguished themselves by a more pure behaviour, confirmed by a kind of initiation (dīkṣe). The most pure section are the Śīlavantas or 'pious people'. They dissociate themselves so radically from the Brāhmaṇa religion that they do not even use water that has been exposed to the sun; because the sun is a deity for the Brāhmaṇas. Therefore, it is impossible for them to draw water from wells, tanks, or rivers; and so they have to dig a hole in the sand of the riverbank whenever they need pure water.[110] The Hoḷeyācebaḷakis, next in purity, take a more liberal stand and draw their water from wells but carefully cover the vessel with a cloth when carrying it home. Obviously, Basava's resistance to purity rules has long been forgotten. The most remarkable caste in this category is the priestly caste of Jaṅgamas. The original religious function of jaṅgama has developed into a caste with hereditary priestly qualifications. But, in Bijapur District, some of the old ideals have been preserved: it is still possible for every 'True Liṅgāyata' man to be initiated into priesthood. In the neighbouring district of Dharwar, the development went one step further; and only sons of Jaṅgamas can be initiated.[111] On the other hand, in accordance with the old Vīraśaiva teachings, jaṅgamas are still regarded as so holy that they may eat in the house of any liṅga-wearing person: all possible impurity will vanish in the presence of such divine men. So, in spite of all their strict rules, the Bijapur Liṅgāyatas still dine together if a jaṅgama is present: particularly in a religious house such as a monastery. But there is one exception. Their own religious servants, the Calavādis, are regarded as too impure for this honour; because they originally belonged to the untouchable Mahār caste. Apparently, the category of the 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas' comprises castes of diverse status, including ex-untouchables. Several castes of these 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas' are likewise split up: sometimes on ethnic grounds, sometimes for religious reasons, being one part of the caste more affiliated to Vīraśaivism than other parts. This is even more the case in the category of the 'Half-Liṅgāyatas', where we find groups that have not yet been fully converted. Some have a very low status, such as the leatherworking Samagāra caste; so they will not be accepted as real converts. Others have a status similar to one of the castes in the former category; but they only came later under the influence of the Liṅgāyata culture. A good example is the caste of the Kuruvinavaru, of which we find the earlier converted part under the 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas' and the later one under

[110] Hence they are called Cilimeyagni (cilime is a hole dug in the sand, see REEVE's dictionary).

[111] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 106. Therefore it is incorrect that the Gazetteer for Bijapur District *defines* 'True Liṅgāyatas' as people whose sons may become jaṅgamas. This definition makes the classification unusable for several other districts. It is more suitable to define 'True Liṅgāyatas' as people who are regarded as the descendants of the original Vīraśaivas. See *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 219.

the 'Half-Liṅgāyatas'. The development of ongoing division can be seen in the example of the Sālis who used to have full commensality and intermarriage between the seven subdivisions but lately adopted much stricter rules. The category of 'Half-Liṅgāyatas' is not a static, fixed entity. New castes or parts of castes stand on the threshold. The Kuruba Gurus, the priests of the shepherds, wear the liṅga and could thus be regarded as 'Half-Liṅgāyatas'. The low caste of palm tappers, Īḷigaru, has come in recent time under the influence of Vīraśaivism. The Gazetteer for Dharwar records that they used to burn their dead; but they adopted the practice of burial under the advice of jaṅgamas in about 1875.[112] The latter volume of the Gazetteer includes both Kuruba Gurus and Īḷigarus under the 'Half-Liṅgāyatas', whilst the Bijapur record does not yet regard them as belonging to one of the Liṅgāyata categories.

The classification of the Liṅgāyata castes into three categories has been adopted by several later authors, but their terminology sometimes differs. Edgar Thurston described the Liṅgāyata castes under the rather awkward headings:

- Pañcamasālis
- non-Pañcamasālis with aṣṭāvaraṇa rights
- non-Pañcamasālis without aṣṭāvaraṇa rights.[113]

These terms reflect the growing significance of the name Pañcamasāli for the original adherents of the Vīraśaiva movement. The word means 'weaver of the fifth category' and referred originally to the lowest class of Jainas, who even practised widow-marriage. The term reminds us of the tradition that many Jainas were attracted to the Vīraśaiva movement in the twelfth century, and to the undeniable fact that weaving is an important occupation among the Liṅgāyatas. Thurston's definitions of the second and third categories, however, are not very clear. The 'Half-Liṅgāyatas' are not totally denied the eight holy symbols; because, in that case, they would not be Liṅgāyatas at all. Their position is more characterized by a later date of conversion and hence a transitional stage in which the caste culture is not completely Liṅgāyata. This might include the non-observance of one or more of the eight symbols; but that is not always so. On the other hand, the 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas' are not always entitled to participate in all ceremonies: as we saw in the example of the Calavādis. Therefore, Thurstons terminology is unsatisfactory, despite increasing use.[114]

From the data so far collected, it has become apparent that the Liṅgāyatas formed many groups during the history of their community. Especially the strict rules regarding endogamy demonstrate that those groups must be regarded as real castes. It should be noted that the

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112. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 149; cf. Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, pp. 109-112.
113. Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, p. 251.
114. The classification was worked out by R.E. ENTHOVEN in his *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, pp. 352-354, and in his authorative article 'Lingayats' in *ERE*, Edinburgh / New York, 1930.

other caste characteristic, restricted commensality, was less developed in the Liṅgāyata community. Under influence of the liberal view of purity it was still possible for people from various castes to have their meals together, particularly on religious occasions. A Kannaḍa proverb says about this aspect of Liṅgāyata culture: 'Ūtakke Śivācāra, koḍuvadakke kulācāra' (for meals the law of Śiva, for marriage the law of caste').[115] Only one question remains to be answered and that is: when did this splitting up of the Liṅgāyata community begin? R.E. Enthoven has suggested that this 'disintegration' took place in the nineteenth century. His interpretation is based on the fact that Dubois stated at the beginning of the nineteenth century that an untouchable could join the sect and was not considered to be inferior to a Brāhmaṇa.[116] However, we have already seen that Dubois probably gave information only about the Vīraśaiva teachings and not about their practices. Besides, Enthoven ignores completely the valuable records of Buchanan from the same period which already showed a Liṅgāyata community divided into many castes. But, even before 1800, we find indications that there were distinct Liṅgāyata groups. A classical distinction is that of nirābhāri Vīraśaivas (monastics), viśēṣa Vīraśaivas, and sāmānya Vīraśaivas, which we already find in the works of Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi. The second group is said to correspond with the class of original members from which the jaṅgamas were recruited. The third group is said to comprise later converts.[117] Although it is rather doubtful whether this distinction points to a caste structure such as we find in the nineteenth century, it is at least an indication that the unity of the Liṅgāyata community was broken much earlier than Enthoven suggests. In the course of history, the Liṅgāyatas divided themselves into hierarchically distinct groups; whilst later converts added a number of castes to the original community. In the records of the nineteenth century, we find the result of this development: the Vīraśaivas, once vigorous fighters against caste, finally constituted an extremely compartmentalized community: a conglomeration of many castes and subcastes.

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[115] H.V. NANJUNDAYYA, L.K. ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, Mysore, 1931, p. 90.

[116] ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1922, p. 354. See for the statement of Dubois page 72.

[117] See ARTAL, 'A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith', *The Journal of the Anthrop. Soc. of Bombay*, 1909, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1909, p. 247. The date of Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi is uncertain, but he lived definitely not before Basava, as Artal suggests. He is mentioned in a book of 1655 and he lived probably about one and a half century earlier; see S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 27-28. This classical distinction was taken over by C.P. BROWN, who stresses the unity of the Vīraśaiva community, but nevertheless distinguishes into: Ārādhyas (liṅga-wearing Brāhmaṇas), viśēṣa jaṅgamas (celibate monastics), sāmānya jaṅgamas (married priests), viśēṣa bhaktas (observant laymen), sāmānya bhaktas (ordinary laymen who retain caste); see his 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 148. In the Kannaḍa-speaking countries the Ārādhyas were generally not regarded as members of the Liṅgāyata community, since they were completely following the Brāhmaṇa customs, including the investment with the sacred thread.

The Colonial Period - Concluding Remarks

It appears that, during the ages, the Vīraśaiva egalitarian ideals had faded into the background. In the colonial period, we find a Liṅgāyata community which is quite different from the original casteless fellowship at Kalyāṇa. The Liṅgāyatas had become a caste of themselves, carefully put back on the scale of the Hindu caste hierarchy. They were generally regarded as a kind of Śūdras: below the categories of pure Hindu twice-born people, but definitely above the impure castes that did not find a place in the Hindu varṇa system. The teachings of Basava and the early history of the community were not quite forgotten, but lost their effects in practice. The community was not regarded anymore as an alternative to the orthodox caste culture; and the institution of individual conversion had almost come to an end.

The Liṅgāyatas were not only regarded as a caste by outsiders; but they also behaved as a caste. Particularly in the political field, the Liṅgāyata community manifested itself as a group that tried to gain as much prestige as possible within the caste structure. This became especially apparent in their major role in the non-Brāhmaṇa movement. The success of the movement in Mysore was, at least, that the Liṅgāyata community was finally recognized as a political force which could not be ignored. Less successful were the Liṅgāyatas in their endeavours to rise upwards along the scale of the Hindu caste system. In spite of their claims to a status equal to the Brāhmaṇas, they remained Śūdras in the eyes of orthodox Hindus. As a result, they started to stress their own anti-Brāhmaṇa tradition; and sometimes they even claimed to be a separate religion outside the Hindu domain; but in public opinion, they remained just one of the Hindu castes.

However, although the Liṅgāyatas were generally regarded as one caste among the other Hindu castes, they were internally not a unity at all. Actually, the Liṅgāyata community consisted of a number of castes which were only loosely connected. The core of the community was constituted by the descendants of the original Vīraśaiva community of the twelfth century. Those 'True Liṅgāyatas' were divided into several groups in most regions; but the distinctions were not very sharp: it was still possible to rise by initiation into a higher rank. Consequently, intermarriage occurred: albeit mostly in the form of hypergamy; and in most regions every boy from those groups could become jaṅgama. Round this core of 'True Liṅgāyatas', there were many castes of 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas'. These castes had come later under the influence of Vīraśaivism, but were never allowed to merge with the 'True Liṅgāyatas'. They were split off from their original castes and initially remained in contact with their former caste members: commensality and even intermarriage was generally not forbidden. But, through the years, they closed ranks, especially in the northern part of present Karnataka; and they became distinct, Liṅgāyata castes. The outer circle of the Liṅgāyata community was constituted by the 'Half-Liṅgāyatas': castes which were in a transitional stage of conversion. Some of them were too impure to be ever accepted as entitled to all ceremonies. Other castes had only recently come under the influence of the jaṅgamas and retained many of their former beliefs and customs. These three categories, hierarchically ranked, formed together the Liṅgāyata community. Obviously, caste was deeply rooted in that community during the colonial period.

Post-Independence India - Liṅgāyatas as a Caste

Finally, we shall consider some data from the latest period of Indian history which started with Independence in 1947. A number of sources is available for this period. In the first place, there are the village studies connected with the census in the enlarged state of Mysore in 1961. Since 1956, the state comprised all Kannaḍa-speaking territories and later, in 1973, it was therefore renamed Karnataka. Fifty-one villages from all over this new state were extensively investigated by the census officials. Not all village studies could be consulted for our study and some did not contain relevant information in this respect; but a selection of twenty-three of these surveys will give us some insights into the practice of caste in the rural communities.[118] Not only census investigators, but also academic anthropologists undertook fieldwork in Karnataka in the post-Independence period. Their case studies of villages or towns, often elaborate treatises, form a second valuable source.[119] The political role of the Liṅgāyata community is highlighted by several historians and social scientists.[120] Additional information from newspapers and periodicals is also needed to keep us abreast of the current events in Karnataka. The books and articles, and particularly the speeches, of influential Vīraśaiva gurus constitute another important source. They show how the heritage of Basava is conceived and passed on at present. Own observations and interviews during several study tours in India serve to complete the picture.

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[118] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41.

[119] Jackie ASSAYAG about Hebasuru, a village in Dharwar District; Alan R. BEALS about the village of Namhalli or Hattarahalli in Bangalore District, about Gopalpur, a village in Gulbarga District, and about Elephant, a village in Mysore District; N.J. BRADFORD about Mrityunjayanagar, a suburb of Dharwar; Danesh A. CHEKKI about two suburbs of the same town; K.G. GURUMURTHY about Kallapura, a village in Chitradurga District; K. ISHWARAN, about Shivapur, a village in Dharwar District; N.K. KADETOTAD about two suburbs of Dharwar town; Leela MULLATTI about Dharwar town; C. PARVATHAMMA about the village of Kshetra in Bellary District; M.N. SRINIVAS about Rampura, a village in Mysore District. Three dissertations about monasteries fall also into this category: G.S. BIDARAKOPPA about the activities of Mūrusāviramaṭha in Hubli; H.M. SADASIVAIAH about the principal virakta monastery at Chitradurga and Siddhagaṅgamaṭha near Tumkur; Lise F. VAIL about Tōṇṭadāryamaṭha in Gadag.

[120] Notably Stephen A. OREN, *Religious Groups as Political Organizations*, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia Univ., 1969; id., 'Killing a Myth', *JIH*, Golden Jubilee Vol., 1973, pp. 775-784; see also: Arun P. BALI, 'The Virasaiva Movements', in: S.C. Malik [ed], *Indian Movements*, Simla, 1978, pp. 67-100; Selig S. HARRISON, *India*, Princeton, 1960; T.N. MADAN, B.G. HALBAR, 'Caste and Community in the Private and Public Education of Mysore State', in: Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, Lloyd I. Rudolph [eds], *Education and Politics in India*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 121-147; Chitra SIVAKUMAR, 'Higher Education, Social Stratification and Social Change in Mysore in the 1960s', in: M.N. Srinivas e.a. [eds], *Dimensions of Social Change in India*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 189-213; M.N. SRINIVAS, *Caste in Modern India*, Bombay, 1985.

With the help of those sources, it is not difficult to answer the question of whether the Liṅgāyatas still form a caste as they did in the previous colonial period. All records point in the same direction: the Liṅgāyatas have their own, distinct place in the Hindu caste structure. This can be easily demonstrated with the help of our selection of the census village studies. All twenty-three records include the Liṅgāyatas as one caste among the various other Hindu castes. Not only are the Liṅgāyatas regarded as a caste; but they also behave like a caste organization. From nineteen villages it is recorded that the Liṅgāyatas do not marry outside their own group,[121] whilst the remaining four reports do not give information about that point. Rules concerning commensality seem to be less strict in these villages in the 1960s, and rather typical is probably the information from a village in Bellary District where it is stated that Liṅgāyatas did not take food with any other caste before about 1950; meanwhile, some of them gave up their objections to eating with Brāhmaṇas.[122] It might cause astonishment that the Liṅgāyatas even refused to eat with the upper caste of Brāhmaṇas. But it is already reported in the nineteenth century that Liṅgāyatas did even not take water from Brāhmaṇas. Such strictness continued during the first half of the present century.[123] The fieldwork reports of several anthropologists confirm the caste behaviour of the Liṅgāyatas. There seems to be an even greater caste awareness among the Liṅgāyatas than in other communities; and they are often blamed for being 'communal' or 'casteist'.[124] However, it is very difficult to measure the intensity of caste feelings and there are also great regional differences. In her case study in the northern town of Dharwar, Leela Mullatti found a rather strict observance of caste barriers. A typical illustration is her report that a number of grain seller women put off the personal liṅga before going to work; because they might touch people of other castes which would pollute the liṅga in their opinion.[125] On the other hand, Alan Beals observed in a village near the southern town of Bangalore that rules with regard to commensality were not taken very seriously: and that was already as early as 1952. He mentions that, according to their caste rule, the Liṅgāyatas were not allowed to take food from members of any other caste. But, in practice, the Liṅgāyatas in that village had no objection to eating in a restaurant with a Brāhmaṇa cook: a so-called Brāhmaṇa hotel. And they also took water, non-alcoholic beverages and some kinds of food, like sweets and fried snacks, from other people;

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[121] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 34, 38, 41.

[122] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nr. 21; see also Nrs. 19, 22, 27, 28.

[123] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 225. See also M.N. SRINIVAS, *The Remembered Village*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 170-171.

[124] N.K. KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 77-78; C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, p. 211; M.N. SRINIVAS, 'The Social Structure of a Mysore Village', in: M.N. SRINIVAS [ed], *India's Villages*, London, 1960, p. 30; see also Robert Jan ZYDENBOS, *The Calf became an Orphan*, Utrecht, 1989, p. 126.

[125] Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, p. 90.

though not from untouchables.[126] However, although some caste rules were gradually losing their significance, the Liṅgāyatas remained a clearly distinguishable caste group.

As a caste, the Liṅgāyatas have their own place in the hierarchical order of the Hindu caste system. It is not easy, however, to determine the exact rank of the Liṅgāyatas. There are, of course, regional differences and, moreover, some sources do not give information about the status order. The place of the various jātis in the varṇa hierarchy had become such a contentious issue, that the British Census Commissioner decided as early as 1941 not to record the castes anymore. This was partly caused by the claims of the Liṅgāyatas to a higher status and the resistance of the Brāhmaṇas. After Independence, this policy was continued. But information about castes was still given in the surveys about selected villages that were connected with the census of 1961. The census investigators were obviously concerned not to stress the hierarchical aspect of what they usually called 'the ethnic composition'. In many cases, the castes are classified according to their numerical strength. However, they sometimes give information about the local understanding of the caste order; and in several cases they betray themselves by the way in which they arrange the various castes in the annexed tables. If any information is thus available, the Liṅgāyatas are always placed below the Brāhmaṇas and above all others including the Pañcāḷas.[127] The same hierarchical position was recorded by Alan Beals in the village he studied in Gulbarga District.[128] A somewhat different ranking was made by C. Parvathamma on the basis of her fieldwork in a village in Bellary District: the Liṅgāyatas are placed fourth after the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas (rarely found in other regions), and the Pañcāḷas.[129] In one village record of the 1961 census, the problem is even solved by giving the Liṅgāyatas an own entry as 'Hindu Liṅgāyatas' next to Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Jainas.[130] Again, it appears that the position of the Liṅgāyatas in the classical varṇa hierarchy is not unambiguous. Even in the modern period, Brāhmaṇas still consider them to be on the level of Śūdras; whilst Liṅgāyatas claim to be at least equal to the Brāhmaṇas.[131] This is even reflected in the studies of anthropologists who are Liṅgāyatas themselves. It is very remarkable that we find a different hierarchical order in the village studies of K. Ishwaran and K.G. Gurumurthy. Ranking the castes in their respective villages, both place the Liṅgāyatas on top of the list: above Brāhmaṇas and other twice-born communities. The Liṅgāyatas are the dominant caste in those two villages, as they are in many rural areas in Karnataka; but it is doubtful whether this places them on the highest position of the caste order in the eyes of the whole village.

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[126] Alan R. BEALS, 'Change in the Leadership of a Mysore Village', in: M.N. Srinivas [ed], *India's Villages*, London, 1960, p. 148.

[127] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 10, 13, 16, 17, 19, 33, 38.

[128] Alan R. BEALS, *Gopalpur*, New York, 1980, p. 36.

[129] PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, p. 39.

[130] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nr. 37, Table IV.

[131] BEALS, *Gopalpur*, p. 97; KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, p. 79; SRINIVAS, *The Remembered Village*, p. 170; id., *Caste in Modern India*, p. 43.

Particularly Gurumurthy's statement that 'the Lingayats have gained unquestioned dominant position in the caste hierarchy replacing the Brahmins' seems to be not very objective.[132]

Status and power are not combined in the caste society, according to Dumont,[133] and the Liṅgāyatas provide ample proof of this. Although their ritual status is never of the highest order, they certainly exercise great political power in most of the villages where they are numerically strong. Indian village politics are usually determined to a great extent by caste interests. This is particularly apparent during elections. The various village studies provide some interesting illustrations of the political role of the Liṅgāyatas. C. Parvathamma has described extensively how candidates for the village council exploited all their traditional ties with caste fellows and lower serving castes in order to collect as many votes as possible. In her example, however, a new Liṅgāyata opposition group did not succeed in defeating the ruling party, dominated by Kṣatriyas, because of controversies in their own community. This is reported from more villages, and it seems that the social complexity of the Liṅgāyata community weakened its political influence on more than one occasion.[134] But, on the whole, Liṅgāyatas are in a position to control local politics on a broad front througout the villages of Karnataka.

Not only locally, but also on the level of state politics, Liṅgāyatas appear to be an influential caste. Already in the first quarter of the century, they played a vital role in the non-Brāhmaṇa movement in the princely state of Mysore. This struggle was largely focused upon gaining the admittance to government service and education. But, a few years later, there arose a new political issue that would dominate the politics of the first years after Independence. As early as 1927, the All-India Vīraśaiva Mahāsabhā expressed the Liṅgāyatas' preference for forming one large state comprising all Kannaḍa-speaking territories. Particularly the Liṅgāyatas in the princely state of Mysore were in favour of this plan; because they were so far dominated by the numerically stronger Okkaligas; and, with their caste fellows in the Kannaḍa districts of the Bombay Presidency, they would form the biggest single community. For the same reason, the Okkaligas were fervent opponents of the plan; and the solidarity of the two groups, that had developed in the non-Brāhmaṇa movement, turned into bitter rivalry. In 1956, Mysore

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[132] K.G. GURUMURTHY, *Kallapura*, Dharwar, 1976, pp. 39-40; K. ISHWARAN, *Tradition and Economy in Village India*, London, 1966, pp. 17, 24; id., *Shivapur*, London, 1968, p. 18; id., 'A Village in Karṇāṭaka', in: Clarence Maloney [ed], *South Asia*, New York, 1974, p. 15; id., *A Populistic Community and Modernization in India*, Leiden, 1977, p. 65. For the concept of 'dominant caste' see: M.N. SRINIVAS, 'The Social System of a Mysore Village', *AA*, Vol. 57, No. 3, Pt. 2, Memoir No. 83, 1955, p. 18: 'A caste may be said to be 'dominant' when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, and when it also wields preponderant economic and political power.'

[133] See pages 21-24.

[134] PARVATHAMMA, *Politica & Religion*, pp. 204-251; id., *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, pp. 88-117; see also BEALS, 'Change in the Leadership of a Mysore Village', pp. 154-160; ISHWARAN, *Shivapur*, pp. 149-172.

State was actually enlarged by including the other Kannaḍa-speaking districts, partly because of the great pressure of the Liṅgāyata organizations. The Liṅgāyatas certainly obtained a much more influential position in the politics of the new state. In many cabinets, the Liṅgāyatas held more seats than any other community; and there were also several Liṅgāyata chief ministers.[135]

In the meantime, an old political issue remained the cause of much lobbying and debating. At the time of Independence, there was still a very disproportionate distribution of government jobs. The Brāhmaṇas, only four percent of the population, held almost fifty percent of the higher, gazetted, posts. Therefore, it was still necessary to take measures in order to improve the position of the backward castes with respect to education and admittance to government service. Initially, all non-Brāhmaṇa castes were regarded as backward; whilst special provisions were made for the depressed communities, the so-called scheduled castes and tribes. Thus, the Liṅgāyatas were again considered to be backward; and they could profit from the corresponding privileges. However, the political discussion on the subject of the criteria for backwardness continued. In 1960, a government committee proposed a new classification by which the Liṅgāyatas were designated as forward because of the rather high literacy rate of their community; whilst the Okkaligas were still regarded as backward. Instead of taking this as a compliment, the Liṅgāyatas protested vehemently and exerted every conceivable political pressure to regain their backward status. Their political position was so strong that the government had to give in.[136]

Finally, the Liṅgāyatas manifested themselves in a recent conflict on an old topic. In view of the census of 1991, the All-India Vīraśaiva Mahāsabhā raised again the question of the position of the Liṅgāyatas within Hinduism. The Mahāsabhā demanded a special column for the Liṅgāyatas as a separate religion: just like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jainas, and nowadays also the Sikhs. The argument is that, so far, the census commission estimated the number of Liṅgāyatas at 4,400,000. Only head-counts could correct this serious underestimation and, therefore, it would be necessary to designate them as a separate religion; because the actual census does not take the various Hindu castes into consideration. The background is that the government has to estimate the numerical strength of the communities in connection with backward classes legislation. This is usually done by taking the results of the last counting, in 1931, and adding a certain percentage to include population growth. The Liṅgāyatas have the misfortune that, in the census of that year, their community was, for some reason, only counted in Bombay Presidency, Mysore, and Hyderabad. The result is that even today no attention is given to the fairly large Liṅgāyata communities in Tamilnadu, Kerala, and those parts of Karnataka that belonged formerly to Madras Presidency. On the other hand, a new head-count could provoke considerable disappointment in the All-India Vīraśaiva Mahāsabhā which claims that there are no less than 30,000,000 Liṅgāyatas![137]

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[135] HARRISON, *India*, pp. 111-114; OREN, *Religious Groups as Political Organizations*, pp. 255-258; SRINIVAS, *Caste in Modern India*, pp. 32-33; BALI, 'The Virasaiva Movements', pp. 89-90.

[136] OREN, *Religious Groups as Political Organizations*, pp. 280-286; BALI, 'The Virasaiva Movements', pp. 87-89; SRINIVAS, *Caste in Modern India*, p. 2.

Post-Independence India - Liṅgāyatas as a Conglomeration of Castes
From the foregoing, it appears that the Liṅgāyatas still manifest themselves clearly as a community with distinct features. In the colonial period, however, the community was divided into a number of castes and subcastes. We have to investigate now, whether these subdivisions are still found among the Liṅgāyatas. A first indication is given by our selection of the village studies connected with the 1961 census. In most villages, the Liṅgāyatas were divided into a number of castes. In the villages with a small Liṅgāyata population, we usually find only a few castes; but, in one large village with many Liṅgāyatas, they are even divided into sixteen castes.[138] We reproduce here the results from three village studies in the northern districts.

Liṅgāyata castes in three villages, according to the *Census of India 1961*[139]

Chiksindgi (Bijapur District)	Hunnur (Bijapur District)	Hulkoti (Dharwar District)
Baḍagi		
	Baḷegāra	
Baṇajiga	Baṇajiga	Baṇajiga
		a. Ādibaṇajiga
		b. Meḷpāvaḍadavaru
		c. Nōnamaṭhada Śīlavantaru
	Biḷījāḍa	
Gāṇiga	Gāṇiga	Gāṇiga (Kāre)
Haḍapada		Haḍapada
	Haṭagāra	
Hūgāra	Hūgāra	Hūgāra
		Jāḍa
		a. Biḷīmagga
		b. Kuruvinaseṭṭi
		c. Hirēkuruvinaseṭṭi
Jaṅgama	Jaṅgama	Jaṅgama
	a. Sāmānya	a. Maṭhastaru (Heṇṇujōḷagiyavaru)
	b. Maṭhapati	b. Gaṇḍujōḷagiyavaru
		c. Ganācāri
		d. Maṭhapati
Kumbāra		
Maḍivaḷa	Maḍivaḷa	Maḍivaḷa

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[137] Information from the daily *Deccan Herald*, 31st January 1989.

[138] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nr. 22. From only two villages it is not recorded that the Liṅgāyatas are divided into castes, Nrs. 15, 25.

[139] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 10, 22, 11.

	Mālegāra	
	Mēdara	
	Nāvida (= Haḍapada)	
	Nāyaka	
Pañcāḷa		
Pañcamasāli	Pañcamasāli	Pañcamasāli
	Reḍḍi	
Śivasimpiga	Śivasimpiga	Śivasimpiga
	Śivayōgi	

The castes are not arranged in a hierarchical order; because the census takers usually tried to avoid discussions about status and therefore enumerated the castes alphabetically or according to their numerical strength. This does not mean, however, that the village population regarded the Liṅgāyata castes as equal. Sometimes there is an indication of status ranking as it was conceived in the village. The record for Hunnur village gives the following hierarchy: Sāmānya Jaṅgama - Maṭhapati - Baṇajiga - Pañcamasāli - Gāṇiga - Haṭagāra - Biḷījāḍa. But only the higher Liṅgāyata castes are thus given a place in the hierarchy; and the author is apparently not inclined to denote some groups as 'lower'.

Fieldworkers who are not in government service generally feel more free to give information about such sensitive questions as local hierarchy. Ishwaran found in his village in Dharwar District fifteen Liṅgāyata castes which he arranged according to prestige as follows: Hirēmaṭha - Cikkamaṭha - Ganācāri - Maṭhapati - Hūgāra - Pūjāri - Ādibaṇajiga - Śīlavanta Baṇajiga - Pañcamasāli - Pañcamasāli Tōṭiga - Sādaru - Biḷījāḍa - Kārejāḍa - Gāṇiga - Haḍapada.[140] The first six castes are divisions of Jaṅgamas, and so, at least, this is clear again that the Jaṅgamas attained an unchallenged position at the top of the Liṅgāyata community. The lowest position is for the barber caste of Haḍapadas, and this would invariably be the case in all villages. For the urban setting we owe much to N.J. Bradford who carefully studied the relation between the various Liṅgāyata castes in Mrityunjayanagar, a suburb of Dharwar. One of his methods was a card game in which respondents were asked to place cards with the names of the eight major Liṅgāyata castes in that town in a hierarchical order. Full agreement was only found about the top position of the Jaṅgamas; whilst the Haḍapadas were generally placed at the bottom. Baṇajigas and Pañcamasālis were ranked just below the Jaṅgamas, but their mutual order remained unclear. The rank of the castes with lower priestly functions, like the Hūgāra (florists), was determined differently as well; sometimes they were regarded as a low sort of Jaṅgamas, but others placed them as a kind of servants just above the barber caste.[141] Bradford has demonstrated in a convincing way that an order of status is still recognizable in such an urban milieu; but only top and bottom are unambigously fixed and the middle-range castes do not differ very much in status. However, although the status

[140] ISHWARAN, 'A Village in Karṇāṭaka', in: Clarence Maloney [ed], *South Asia*, New York, 1974, p. 16; see also: id., *Shivapur*, London, 1968, p. 19.

[141] N.J. BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, pp. 192-196.

differences are diminishing in the towns, the division of the Liṅgāyata community into various castes, as we found it in the nineteenth century records, is still present.

Especially in the northern districts, there are many Liṅgāyata castes; and it is not difficult to recognize the classification from the last century. Here, a great number of castes has come under the influence of the Liṅgāyata culture and is more or less converted. In the southern districts, where the Liṅgāyatas are in a minority position, they do not so much exert an attraction on other castes. Not much has changed in this respect since the nineteenth century. However, the interaction between the various Liṅgāyata castes has certainly changed. Formerly members from various castes did not take food from each other and only on religious occasions, in the presence of a jaṅgama, they had dinner together. Nowadays, commensality is generally accepted in the Liṅgāyata community. From thirteen of the twenty-three villages in our selection from the census such a practice is reported,[142] whilst from eight villages no information is available. Only two village records mention that commensality is still restricted, the lowest classes being not allowed to share food with the highest ranks.[143] A typical situation is described by Parvathamma on the basis of her fieldwork in a village in the Bellary district. Here is general commensality among the Liṅgāyatas, with the exception of the barbers. The family priest of the barbers, however, advised them to undergo initiation (dīkṣe) and to render their services henceforth only to other Liṅgāyatas. Then the priest would not make any objections to taking food cooked by the barbers. However, the barbers were not at all willing to lose their clients from other castes; and they preferred a guaranteed income to higher status in their own community.[144] Nevertheless, it is apparent that commensality is rarely restricted nowadays among the Liṅgāyatas. The situation concerning marriage rules is different. In most of the villages in our selection of the census material, there was not much scope for marriages outside one's own caste. In sixteen out of the twenty-three villages the Liṅgāyata castes are described as strictly endogamous.[145] Only in three villages were the rules interpreted less strictly; and cross-caste marriages in the middle ranks occurred; or the Jaṅgamas married women from all the lower ranks.[146] In the towns, the situation is not much different: as appears in the studies of Leela Mullatti, Danesh Chekki, and N.K. Kadetotad in Dharwar town. They all concluded that the Liṅgāyatas in Dharwar were almost uninamously in favour of caste endogamy and marriages between Liṅgāyatas of different castes were indeed rare exceptions.[147]

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[142] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 11, 13, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34.

[143] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 28, 41.

[144] C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 50-52.

[145] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 34, 38, 41.

[146] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 13, 15, 19. The remaining four records did not give information on this point.

However, there is a tendence among modern Vīraśaiva gurus to regard the existence of various Liṅgāyata castes as an impediment to growth for the 'tree of Vīraśaiva society being overgrown with sub-castes like weeds'.[148] The unity and equality of all liṅga-wearers is stressed; and the distinctions between higher and lower ranks inside the community have become blurred in the official propagation of the faith. Likewise, modern religious organizations such as the Basava Samiti are devoted to the classical Vīraśaiva ideals of equality and consequently have a universalistic approach. The period during which Liṅgāyatas tried to divide their own community into an alternative varṇa structure with Vīraśaiva Brāhmaṇas on top and Vīraśaiva Śūdras at the bottom end, seems to be ended. There is certainly a connection with the fact that the Liṅgāyata community has become more closed. Although individual conversions do take place, no more new castes join the fold. On the other hand, the castes which were considered to be only Half-Liṅgāyatas in the colonial period are nowadays generally more acceptable to the other Liṅgāyata groups as fellow believers. It can be expected that the distinctions between the various Liṅgāyata castes will lose their importance in the future: even with respect to marriage alliances.

Post-Independence India - Concluding Remarks

The data from the post-Independence period do not differ significantly from those of the colonial period.. The Liṅgāyata community is still generally considered to be one of the Hindu castes. The place of the Liṅgāyatas on the caste scale is more controversial, but that is also the case with many other castes in modern times. The Liṅgāyatas still claim a high status and sometimes even pretend to have supplanted the Brāhmaṇas at the top. But the orthodox sections of Hindu society, and notably the Brāhmaṇas, do not regard the Liṅgāyatas as higher in status than Śūdras. According to the latest anthropological studies, the Liṅgāyata community still manifests all the characteristics of a caste. As a rule, there is no commensality with other groups, although in practice this is not strictly maintained. Marriage partners are almost invariably selected from the own community. The Liṅgāyatas even have the reputation for a greater caste awareness than others.

The political role of the Liṅgāyata community is considerable, as it was since the heyday of the non-Brāhmaṇa movement. The various Liṅgāyata organizations lobbied extensively for the creation of one large Kannaḍa-

[147] Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, p. 103; Danesh A. CHEKKI, *Modernization and Kin Network*, Leiden, 1974, pp. 24-25, 84-85; KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, Delhi, 1979, p. 51. See also: BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, pp. 73-75.

[148] Śrī GAṄGĀDHARA Rājayogīndra Mahāswāmiji, *Heart's Blossoms*, Hubli, 1974, p. 60 (Mūrusāviramaṭha, Hubli); see also Lise F. VAIL, *Renunciation, Love, and Power in Hindu Monastic Life*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1987, pp. 69-71 (about Tōṇṭadāryamaṭha, Gadag); Mate MAHADEVI, *Lingayatism*, Bangalore, 1986, p. 38 (Viśva Kalyāṇa Mission).

speaking state. They also exerted considerable pressure upon the government to prevent the Liṅgāyatas from losing their privileges as a backward caste. Most recently, they agitated for recognition as a separate religious community in the census. On the level of village politics, the Liṅgāyatas are also renowned for their lobbying and campaigning, particularly on the occasion of elections.

Because of this political role, a strong Liṅgāyata identity has emerged which blurs the internal divisions to some extent; although sometimes the political influence of the community is weakened by internal opposition. It remains a plural community: the difference between the original Vīraśaiva groups and the later converts is still recognizable; but the distinctions are not so sharp as they were. A hierarchical order still exists, but, especially in the towns, there is hardly any difference in prestige within the majority of middle-range castes. Only the top position of the Jaṅgamas and the lowest rank of some impure castes, such as barbers, are clearly distinguished. Even commensality between the various Liṅgāyata castes is generally accepted. For marriage arrangements, caste classification still has great significance; but it can be expected that also this will also become less strict in the future.

Although the extreme compartmentalization of the Liṅgāyata community in the nineteenth century is definitely a thing of the past, differences based upon birth do still play a role. And, in society at large, the Liṅgāyatas are definitely identified by their being born as Liṅgāyatas. They manifest themselves likewise in the society of Karnataka as a closed community. Thus, the movement which started with a complete rejection of caste differences has finally become a caste itself.

CHAPTER 2

LABOUR AND PROPERTY

Ranking Professions

The caste system is not only the expression of status differences based on purity, it also reflects an occupational hierarchy. In the classical structure of four varṇa categories, each one is characterized by a certain sector of professional activities. The religious law books, the Dharmaśāstras, provide detailed rules concerning the duties of each caste category. The most influential of those books is the Manusmṛti, which dates back to the beginning of the Christian era. It gives many prescriptions with regard to the occupational activities of the various caste categories. Six functions are reserved for the Brāhmaṇas: teaching and studying the Vedic scriptures; performing sacrifices for their own benefit and for others; giving and receiving of alms (I:88; X:74-75). By means of three of the six functions, the Brāhmaṇa can earn his livelihood: teaching, making sacrifices for others, and accepting gifts (X:76). The primary task of the second caste category of Kṣatriyas is to protect the people: and therefore they carry arms (I:89; X:79). The Vaiśyas, who constitute the third layer, are expected to subsist by trading, lending money, tending cattle, and cultivating land (I:90; VIII:410; IX:326-333; X:79). Finally, the Śūdras have only one duty: 'to serve meekly these other three castes' (I:91; see also VIII:410; IX:334-335). The hierarchy of the prescribed duties is even more highlighted if we take into consideration the rules for those bad times in which the traditional caste professions are not sufficient for subsistence. Then the Brāhmaṇa may adopt the occupation of a Kṣatriya and, if necessary, even that of a Vaiśya. In the latter case, however, he may get an income from agriculture; but he has to avoid undertaking manual work in the field himself; because injuring the earth is not regarded as virtuous. Likewise, it is forbidden for him to do business in certain articles of trade, such as cattle, food, and cloth (X:81-93). The Kṣatriya may never undertake the Brāhmaṇa duties of teaching, sacrificing and receiving of alms. He is allowed to adopt the occupation of Vaiśyas, with the same restrictions as in the case of a Brāhmaṇa (X:77,83,95). The Brāhmaṇa duties are likewise absolutely forbidden to the Vaiśyas; but the latter may in times of distress perform Śūdra tasks (X:78,98). If a Śūdra family almost starves to death, the man may perform paid manual work instead of serving the higher castes; but he is not allowed to acquire wealth (X:99;129). Apparently, religious law ranks the various professions in a hierarchy analogous to the caste order. And, since the caste structure is based on purity, the various occupations are also differentiated in several grades of purity. The most pure professional activities (and consequently only to be undertaken by Brāhmaṇas), are the religious duties of teaching, performing sacrifices and receiving gifts. After government and defence, trade, banking, cattle breeding, and agriculture, we find manual labour as the lowest occupation.

This theory of ranking professions has exerted an enormous influence upon the practice of Indian life. Every one of the numerous castes (jāti) has a place in this overall system of division of labour, which was characterized by specialization and interdependence.[1] Specialization means in this respect that every caste and subcaste has a certain profession as its own traditional vocation. This does not imply that all members of the caste necessarily follow that specific occupation, nor that no other caste has the same specialization. Actually, there are many farming castes which hardly show any difference in profession, even when living in the same region. In most castes, there has been always some diversity of professions, because not all members could make a living by following the traditional occupation. However, the principle remains that castes are characterized by certain occupational activities; and this is especially conspicuous in the case of castes with religious functions, either high or low, and serving castes. The high religious functions of teaching and performing sacrifice are, of course, reserved for the Brāhmaṇas. But castes with low religious functions such as manufacturing flower garlands or making music are likewise very specialized. The untouchable castes are often also completely specialized in one profession, such as washing clothes or hair cutting. In the traditional caste society, as it is nowadays still found in the villages, all castes are interdependent through their professions. It is an economic system which is based upon the exchange of services and gifts in kind. The land-holding castes provide the other castes with the necessary agricultural products; and the other castes offer their trades and services in turn. This network is usually called 'jajmānī', although in Karnataka the appropriate term is 'āya'.[2] The system is basically religious, although not all services as such can be regarded as religious acts. However, all relations between the various castes are determined by the network of exchange; and Dumont concludes rightly that 'this view of an ordered whole, in which each is assigned his place, is fundamentally religious.'[3]

Social Mobility

Such a pattern of society on a religious basis results doubtlessly in a strong social cohesion. Every caste has its own place in the system; and no one can be missed. People of different status and background are linked together by traditional duties and rights, and by common interests. On the other hand, the system is not likely to give an impetus to social mobility. Taking up another profession is not forbidden to the individual; but the possibilities are very much restricted by the system. Especially higher-ranked occupations are generally reserved for higher castes. Likewise, many trades and crafts are the monopoly of a certain caste and cannot be undertaken by others. A more fundamental consideration is that the caste system prevents any rationalization of economic life, so that people will be not easily inclined to dissociate themselves from the traditional patterns and to undertake new enter-

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1. See Louis DUMONT, *Homo Hierarchicus*, Chicago/London, 1980, pp. 106-108.
2. The system, as it functions in a village in Karnataka, is described elaborately by K. ISHWARAN, *Tradition and Economy in Village India*, London, 1966.
3. DUMONT, *Homo Hierarchicus*, p. 107.

prises.[4] Since attaining a higher level of socio-religious status is by definition impossible within the caste system, the only way of increasing one's prestige is to become rich. However, the acquisition of wealth is restricted in the traditional value system by several factors. Individual ambition is likely to come into conflict with the interests of the family; because property is actually held by the whole joint-family.[5] The jajmānī-system with its fixed compensations for rendered services makes it very difficult to enlarge one's income. Moreover, there are many rules in the religious law books which limit the methods of earning. A well-known rule distinguishes between 'white', 'mixed', and 'dark' wealth: according to the mode in which the possessions are obtained. 'White' indicates, among other things, the earnings by means of those activities that are in line with the prescriptions for one's caste category. 'Mixed' are those earnings that are obtained by activities belonging to the varṇa immediately below one's own caste category; whilst 'dark' are the earnings from criminal activities or from occupations that belong to the remaining caste categories.[6] These rules stress again the close connection between caste and occupation.

However, it is interesting to note that particularly in the twelfth century, when the Vīraśaiva movement began to flourish, the traditional restricting rules were under discussion among the experts of religious law.[7] It was in this century that Vijñāneśvara's influential treatise Mitākṣarā was written. Here, an attempt was made to increase the possibilities for earning property; especially for the Brāhmaṇas who were bound by the scriptures to the ceremonial functions and thus could not take advantage from industrial enterprises and commercial activities. The conclusion of this new juridical treatise is that the classical restrictions had only a spiritual significance; and that in worldly affairs, it was not unlawful to acquire property by means of other activities than the traditional way of life belonging to one's caste. Apparently, there was a demand for a less strict occupational structure that would adapt itself better in new socio-economic circumstances. A new interpretation

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4. This is the main conclusion of the classical study on Hinduism by Max WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Bd. II, Tübingen, 1972 (English translation: *The Religion of India*, New York/London, 1968). About the Weberian thesis: M.M.W. LEMMEN, *De godsdienstsociologie van Max Weber*, Nijmegen, 1977 (English translation: *Max Weber's Sociology of Religion*, Hilversum, 1990); Wolfgang SCHLUCHTER [red], *Max Webers Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Frankfurt am Main, 1984; Jakob RÖSEL, *Die Hinduismusthese Max Webers*, München, 1982; Anthony GIDDENS, *Capitalism and modern social theory*, Cambridge, 1974; see also SCHOUTEN, 'Hinduism and Development', *Religion and Society*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, 1981, pp. 68-99.
5. See J. Duncan M. DERRETT, *The Concept of Property in Ancient Indian Theory and Practice*, Groningen, 1968, p. 3.
6. Pandurang Vaman KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Poona, 1974, p. 130.
7. The discussion is described extensively by J. Duncan M. DERRETT in his article 'Expediency v. Authority: The Right to Earn in Ancient India', in his *Religion, Law and the State in India*, London, 1968, pp. 122-147.

of the classical prescriptions made it possible to gain profit from new professional activities, at least for the higher circles in the society.

Twelfth Century Karnataka

We observed already that the society in Karnataka during the twelfth century was completely under the spell of caste.[8] The population was divided into a great number of castes, which were usually characterized by certain professions. Very remarkable is that the gap between the higher, twice-born castes and the lower ones was getting larger and larger. There was a tendency to downgrade several crafts and trades, so that we find even goldsmiths and carpenters denoted as antyaja, a traditional category of low-ranked castes.[9] The Brāhmaṇas held the unquestioned top position in society, not only in socio-religious status, but likewise with regard to economic strength. They took great advantage of the belief that it was a meritorious act to make donations to Brāhmaṇas. Especially the gift of land was considered to be most rewarding. The authoritative twelfth century lawyer Vijñāneśvara even stated that 'the fruit of gifts of land is attainment of a place in heaven, and whatever sin one commits, knowingly or otherwise, by gifting away land even to the extent of a 'cow's hide', one is purified'.[10] The result was that the Brāhmaṇas controlled a large part of the agricultural production. All over the country, there were many agrahāras: villages donated by the king or other rich people to groups of Brāhmaṇas. However, although the majority of the population was still employed in agriculture in the twelfth century, a new economic sector was emerging.[11] The northwestern part of the present State of Karnataka was characterized by a growing commercialization. In this region, there were many market towns where industry and trade formed the main sources of income. In these new urban centres a money economy arose which was quite different from the exchange in kind as practised in the rural economic system. The present district of Dharwar was the centre of this new monetary economy, which is illustrated by the fact that out of the nine mints in the Kannaḍa country, no less than six were situated in this district. A new class of traders arose, which was organized in powerful merchant guilds. Notably, the guild of the Five Hundred Svāmis of Ayyāvoḷe (Aihole) was a very influential body; and its records are even found in Thailand, Sumatra, Burma, and Ceylon. This guild was engaged in the trade of elephants, horses, gems, spices, perfumes, and drugs. In the inscriptions, the Five Hundred Svāmis bear the title 'protectors of the Vīrabaṇañjudharma'. Although the meaning of this term is not quite certain, it is likely that it has a connection

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8. See pages 24-25.
9. R.N. NANDI, 'Origin of the Vīraśaiva Movement', *IHR*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1975, p. 33. See also S.C. NANDIMATH, 'Śri Basaveśvara', *Journal of the Karnatak University - Humanities*, Vol. VIII, 1964, p. 216.
10. VIJÑĀNEŚVARA, *Mitākṣarā*, quoted by S. GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, Mysore, 1974, p. 16, see also pp. 27-28. The term 'cow's hide' could be taken as a hyperbole, meaning: 'whatever the size may be', but according to some commentators it indicates an old land measure.
11. For the following data see: NANDI, 'Origin of the Vīraśaiva Movement', p. 37.

with the emerging Vīraśaiva movement, in which the traders' caste of Baṇajiga would play such an important role.[12] The Brāhmaṇas too profited from the new prosperity in the urban centres; because a less strict interpretation of the traditional duties enabled them to have other sources of income than only teaching, sacrificing and receiving gifts. But the urban setting was also profitable for the craftsmen whose trades had decreased considerably in prestige. They organized themselves likewise in guilds (śrēṇi) in order to protect their interests. The urban milieu was a good breeding-ground for new socio-religious ideals which undermined the static caste structure. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Vīraśaiva movement received support in these circles; but it is an exaggeration to explain the origin of the movement entirely on the basis of the needs of the new urban moneyed classes.[13] The Vīraśaiva movement also had a great number of adherents from the rural sector: both farmers and members of the low servant classes, just as nowadays still large sections of the Liṅgāyata community are cultivators. However, the Vīraśaiva teachings about labour and property were certainly of special interest for those who were looking for an alternative to the static occupational ideology of the traditional caste system.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Dedicated Work

The vacana literature contains numerous verses which express the Vīraśaiva ideas about occupational life. People from various castes joined the movement; and, consequently, many professions were represented in the community at Kalyāṇa. Also many persons who devoted their lives to spirituality and penance were attracted by the religious revival. Therefore, it was important for the Vīraśaiva leaders to elucidate the worth of labour in comparison with ascetism, as well as the value of the various occupational activities.

Basava himself had attained a high degree of mystical experience; but, nevertheless, he remained active in professional life. Some of his vacanas reveal a certain tension between his professional duties and his devotion to the spiritual community. Our investigation into the Vīraśaiva ethics of labour might start with one of those texts.

Hottār̤e eddu kaṇṇa hoseyutta
enna oḍaliṅge, enna oḍavege, enna maḍadi-makkaḷigendu
kudiḏenādaḍe enna manakke manavē sākṣi!
'Āsanē śayanē yānē samparkē sahabhōjanē ।
sañcaranti mahāghōrē narakē kālamakṣayaṃ ॥
emba śrutiya Basavaṇṇanōduvanu' embaru,
'bhavi Bijjaḷana gaddugeya keḷage kuḷḷirdu
ōlaisihane'ndu nuḍivarayyā pramatharu.

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[12] GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, pp. 117-126.

[13] R.N. NANDI investigates in his article on 'Origin of the Vīraśaiva Movement' the 'material background' of that origin; he even states: 'It is possible that the revival of trade in the region intensified commercial competition which in turn increased tension between the brāhmaṇical and Jain traders, leading ultimately to the formation of the Vīraśaiva which of necessity directed its first offensive against the powerful Jains', p. 34.

Koḍuvene uttaravanavarige? Koḍalamme!
Hole holeyara maneya hokkādaḍeyū,
sale kaikūliya māḍiyādaḍeyū,
nimma nilaviṅge kudivenallade, enna oḍalavasarakke kudidenādaḍe
tale daṇḍa! Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[14]

If, getting up at dawn and rubbing my eyes, I would be already ablaze
for my body, for my belongings, for my wife and children,
let my mind witness against my mind!
They say: 'Basava reads this verse:
Whoever is sitting, sleeping, or walking with them, associating or eating,
he shall go with them to a terrible hell, for an endless time.
But he sits below the throne of Bijjaḷa, the worldling,
and is serving him,' so the pious are speaking.
Shall I give them an answer? Yes, I can give it!
Whenever I went to the house of the lowest untouchables,
I have always worked hard with my hands,
set ablaze for your majesty, and if I would be ablaze for the sake of my body,
let me pay with my head, *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers*!

Obviously, not everybody was impressed by Basava's high office as the treasurer (bhaṇḍāri) of king Bijjaḷa. There were pious people in the Vīraśaiva community who blamed him for his position at the court. They were convinced that true spirituality must lead to withdrawal from worldly affairs. They suspected him of a selfish and hypocritical attitude; because he studied the sacred scriptures and nevertheless took profit from his office. The authoritative text (śruti) that supports their conviction forbids the association with unbelievers; apparently king Bijjaḷa belonged to that category. Basava defends his behaviour by stressing that he does not belong to the category of people who are only interested in their own affairs, working from the early morning for their and their family's welfare. Therefore, he is engaged in charitable work, particularly for the degraded sections of the society. And Basava brings forward how he does not hesitate to enter the houses of the untouchables and to undertake all kinds of manual work for their benefit. He presents his argument with great emphasis: certainly, he is able to answer his opponents. The strength of his answer lies in the obvious suggestion that the pious criticasters would not be prepared to humble themselves and to perform menial duties. The criterion for real spirituality is thus one's attitude towards the poor and needy, and not one's scrupulosity concerning professional relations with outsiders. And the vacana ends with a repetition of the argument at the beginning: work must be done for the sake of God and not for own benefit. Performing work for selfish goals is a deadly sin in the eyes of Basava.

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14. BASAVA, 709 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 234; IYENGAR, p. 11; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, pp. 212-213).

In another vacana, Basava expresses the same conviction, that work must not be done for the worker's interest. This text does not, however, deal with Basava's own professional activities; but it holds a general admonition. Moreover, it contains the term that became the central notion of the Vīraśaiva ethics of work.

Guruliṅgajaṅgamada hesarininda
kāyakava māḍi guru carake vañcisi
tāyi tande, bandhu baḷaga, heṇḍati, oḍahuṭṭidavaru
endu samasta padārthava cāgeya māḍuvanobba
bhaktadrōhi nōḍā, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[15]

One who follows a vocation in the name of guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama,
and then cheats the guru and the mendicant
by giving all his earnings under the pretension that
they are mother, father, relative, family, wife, brother and sister,
- see, *Lord of the Meeting Rivers*,
he is a treacherous devotee!

Basava tells what has to be done with the earnings of one's profession. Because work is done in the name of the Vīraśaiva triad of guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama, it is not for own benefit; but the profit must be given away. The worker is expected to make donations to his guru and to the religious mendicants (jaṅgamas) who are in the neighbourhood. Gifts to the liṅga are not made in Vīraśaivism; because temple worship is abolished. Basava stresses the right attitude in making these donations: it must not be done in order to oblige the religious people. One must not hold on to them, pretending that they are members of the family. The only acceptable gifts are given without expecting anything back. And, in this respect, Basava uses the term that has become famous in the Vīraśaiva tradition: 'kāyaka', here translated with 'vocation'.[16] The word means literally 'relating to the body' and hence it indicates primarily manual labour; by extension, the word is used for any profession. With the term kāyaka, the Vīraśaiva devotees expressed their conviction, that the various castes in their community at Kalyāṇa had all to give a contribution to the movement by the performance of their own traditional professions. The worth of all these occupations was acknowledged; and especially the classical disdain for manual work was rejected. However, Basava's vacana quoted above makes clear that an occupation has to fulfil certain conditions before it can be called real kāyaka in the name of guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama. A genuine vocation is definitely not performed with the purpose of material or even spiritual benefit. The religious world, personified in guru and mendicant, may not be obliged by it. Regarding this aspect, Basava follows a classical Hindu tradition, which has a central place in the Bhagavadgītā. There, it is taught that work must be done without any attachment to the results.[17] Likewise, Basava teaches in this vacana, that work does not give a claim on the religious authorities. Hence it must be done for its own sake and not in view of the results.

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[15] BASAVA, 1122 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 436).

[16] About kāyaka: R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition', *JAAR*, Vol. 50, 1982, pp. 605-619; William MADTHA, *A Semantic Unfolding of 'Kāyaka' in Śaraṇa Thought and Literature*, Paper read at the Int. Symp. on Dravidian Religion, Trivandrum, 1987 (unpubl.). 'Kāyaka' is a popular topic in modern Liṅgāyata circles; see e.g. the following articles in the *Basava Journal*: R.T. JANGAM, 'Basaveshwara's Concept of Kayaka: A Critical View', Vol. 9, No. 2, 1984, pp. 37-50; M.C. SHANTA MURTHY, 'Economic Philosophy of Lord Basaveshwara', Vol. 10, No. 2/3, 1985-'86, pp. 14-21; B.B. KANAVI, 'Basaveshwara and his Economic Thinking', Vol. 13, No. 1/2, 1988, pp. 1-14; R.N. HADIMANI, 'The Protestant Ethic in Basava's Teachings', Vol. 13, No. 1/2, 1988, pp. 23-33; MICHAEL's article was also published in the *Basava Journal*: Vol. 8, No. 4, 1984, pp. 13-34. See also: V.K. JAVALI, 'Kāyaka and Dignity of Labour', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, Bangalore, 1967, pp. 139-144.

Many vacanas deal with the central notion of kāyaka and stress the right attitude in performing work. The most famous saying on this topic is not found in the work of Basava, but in a vacana of the rather unknown devotee Āyidakki Mārayya. In this poem, we find the words that have become the motto of the Vīraśaiva attitude towards professional activities.

> Kāyakadalli niratanādaḍe
> gurudarśanavādaḍū maṟeyabēku,
> liṅgapūjeyādaḍū maṟeyabēku,
> jaṅgama mundiddaḍū haṅgu haṟiyabēku,
> kāyakavē kailāsavāda kāraṇa,
> Amaḷēśvaraliṅgavāyittādaḍū kāyakadoḷagu.[18]

> If you are engaged in your vocation,
> and a guru appears: forget him,
> and if there is worship of the liṅga: forget it,
> and if a jaṅgama stands before you: break the obligation,
> for the vocation is heaven itself,
> and *the Immaculate Lord Liṅga* is in the vocation!

This remarkable vacana emphasizes the importance of dedication to one's vocation (kāyaka) to such an extent that even reverence for guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama is relativized. For Mārayya, nothing can be more important than performing one's work. Whilst engaged in that work, all other things must fade into the background. Even if a guru appears, the work must not be interrupted. This is surprising, because the sight of the guru (darśana) was considered to be most auspicious, also among the Vīraśaivas. Likewise, there is no reason to stop working when it is time to worship the liṅga. And the obligation to make donations to every religious mendicant who approaches the believers, is not valid for the dedicated worker. Thus, Mārayya stresses the worth of labour; and the text is even more remarkable in the light of his own vocation: the humble work of gleaning the rice that was left on the fields or had fallen on the streets. Even such a vocation can be regarded as nothing less than heaven itself: 'kāyakavē kailāsa' - the vocation is heaven! The rice gleaner (āyidakki) Mārayya has experienced the contact with God in the performing of his simple duties and thus his conclusion is that the Lord is in the vocation. A stronger motivation to work could hardly be imagined.

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[17] The doctrine is called niṣkāmakarma. It is expressed clearly in the famous verse

> Karmaṇyevādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana |
> mā karmaphalaheturbhūrmā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi ||
> Your right is only to perform work, but never to enjoy the fruits;
> let not the fruits of the work be your motive, nor inclination to idleness.

Bhagavadgītā II:47 (see also IV:18-23; VI:1-4).
However, it should be noted that, in the Gītā, 'karma' refers also to sacrificial duties. This ritual connotation is absent in the Vīraśaiva 'kāyaka' doctrine.

[18] ĀYIDAKKI MĀRAYYA, in: P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, 1715 (cf. *Śūnyasampādane* XII:1; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 85; MICHAEL, 'Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition', p. 610).

Āyidakki Mārayya's words 'kāyakavē kailāsa have become very famous in the history of Vīraśaivism, much more famous than its author. Hence, we find the words often attributed to Basava himself, although the expression does certainly not occur in his works.[19] But, certainly, it fits in with Basava's line of thought with regard to the experience of God in worldly life. A saying that resembles the rice gleaner's famous words, is used twice by Basava in his vacanas. Especially in the following poem, it has a central place.

Dēvalōka martyalōkavembudu bēr̤e mattuṇṭe?
Ī lōkadoḷage matte anantalōka!
Śivalōka Śivācāravayyā.
Śivabhaktanidda ṭhāve dēvalōka,
bhaktanaṅgaḷave Vāraṇāsi; kāyave kailāsa!
Idu satya, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[20]

What is called the world of God,
and what is called the world of mortals,
- are they different?
Within this world is the endless world!
The world of Śiva: that is doing Śiva's works.
The place where a devotee of Śiva lives, is the world of God.
The devotee's courtyard is Benares; his body is heaven.
So it is, *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers*!

In this vacana, we find one of the most intriguing ideas of Basava. Life in the world is so important to him that he tends to deny the existence of a transcendent world. He is afraid that people might be distracted from their earthly duties by the fascination of the other world. Therefore, he states that the divine world must be found within the empirical world. The way to come into contact with the divinity is the performance of work, especially in the sense of just behaviour and charitable acts (Śivācāra). Then, it can be said that the place where such work is done, is the world of God. People need not to go to the holy places, such as Benares, in order to meet God; but they can find Him in their own courtyard. And since a relation with the divinity is

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19. R. Blake MICHAEL goes even so far that he adapts the text of one of Basava's vacanas in a quotation in his article: 'Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition', p. 609.
20. BASAVA, 139 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 46; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 32; IYENGAR, p. 44; SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, p. 214; UMĀSHANKAR, p. 53; ZVELEBIL, p. 28). The phrase 'kāyave kailāsa' occurs also in BASAVA, 872. See also BASAVA, 155, 239.

attained by work, the conclusion can be that the body of the devotee is the abode of God: 'kāyave kailāsa'. Although the word kāyaka is not used, the poem expresses the same conviction, that man must find God not by withdrawal from the world but by following his occupational duties in the world.

Consequently, a vocation (kāyaka) is not simply a duty which returns a reward at the proper time. It is regarded by the Vīraśaiva śaraṇas as an spiritual act in which the divinity can be experienced. At the same time, it is closely connected with notions of charity and altruism. Madtha's definition of kāyaka as 'a theo-centric action having pro-existential commitment' is therefore quite apposite.[21] It underlines the central place of this concept in Vīraśaiva spirituality. The value of ascetic training and mystical experience through yoga was not denied in Vīraśaivism; but for ordinary people there was only one way to reach the divine world: by dedicated work. Therefore, it was held that everybody had to undertake some form of kāyaka, or as one of the śaraṇas put it: 'They are no devotees who are devoid of dedicated work done with their hands'.[22] However, the question must then be put whether every profession is suitable to serve as a means to attain contact with the divine world. A vacana by one of the women devotees speaks about that problem.

Āva kāyakava māḍidaḍū onde kāyakavayyā.
Āva vratavādaḍū onde vratavayyā.
Āya tappidaḍe sāvilla; vrata tappidaḍe kūḍalilla.
Kāka pikadante kūḍalu nāyaka naraka
Gaṅgēśvaraliṅgadalli.[23]

Whatever vocation you follow, it is at least a vocation.
Whatever vow you take, it is at least a vow.
If you miss the profit, there is no death;
but if you miss the vow, there is no union.
The union of a crow and a cuckoo is ultimate hell
for *Liṅga, Lord of Gaṅgā*.

Gaṅgamma, who made this pithy poem, is obviously convinced of the high value of dedicated work. According to her, it does not matter what vocation one chooses; but only the fact that some vocation is chosen, is important. So people must not be judged by the status of their profession, but only by the perseverance in which they perform their duties. Similarly there is no ranking of religious vows; but every dedication has its own worth. Hence, it is not necessary to practise rigorous austerities; because genuine devotion to one's own profession leads also to the union with the divinity. Economic success is not decisive, for only the spirit in which the vocation is performed counts. A devotee who does not aim at profit, will attain the liberation: for

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21. MADTHA, *A Semantic Unfolding of 'Kāyaka' in Śaraṇa Thought and Literature*, p. 8.
22. URILIṄGAPEDDI, quoted by Māte MAHĀDĒVI, *A Guide to Liṅgāyatism*, Dharwar, 1973, p. 78. Consequently, begging is strongly criticized, see BASAVA, 277, 441.
23. GAṄGAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 219. See also BASAVA, 355, 452; SIDDHARĀMA, 367.

him there is no death, no damnation. But a devotee who forsakes his vocation, will not reach the ultimate goal. Consequently, people cannot be classified according to the status of their profession or the severeness of their vow; but they just fall into two categories: those who persist, and those who give up. These two categories are incompatible, for they are just as different as a cawing crow and a singing cuckoo. Thus, the poem rejects in a convincing way the traditional classification of professions; and it stresses the value of all kinds of work. This is anyhow a remarkable message, but it is really surprising if the background of the poetess is taken into consideration. Gaṅgamma is indicated in the manuscripts as 'Gaṅgamma with the vocation of fornication' (hādarada kāyakada Gaṅgamma); and, therefore, it must be assumed that she was a prostitute. Even such a low-graded profession was apparently recognized in the Vīraśaiva community as a way in which the union with the divinity could be attained.

Actually, we find many occupations mentioned in the Vīraśaiva literature of the twelfth century: from the highest positions in society to the lowest occupations of untouchables. There are vacanas written by a scholar (Śivaleṅka Mañcaṇṇa), by a ruler (sakalēśa Mādarasa), by a physician (vaidya Saṅgaṇṇa), by a collector of taxes (suṅkada Baṅkaṇṇa), by a steward (bokkasada Saṅgaṇṇa), by a carpenter (bāci kāyakada Basavaṇṇa), by a watchman (taḷavāra Kāmidēva), by a farmer (okkalu Maddayya), by an umbrella-holder (sattige kāyakada Māritande), by a ferryman (ambigara Cauḍayya), by a clown (bahurūpi Cauḍayya), by a barber (haḍapada Appaṇṇa), and by a washerman (maḍivāḷa Mācayya), to mention only a few of them.[24] Among the women devotees we find spinners (kadira kāyakada Kāḷavve, kadira Ṛemmavve), a mirror-maker (kannaḍi kāyakada Rēmamma), a rope-maker (kālakaṇṇiya Kāmamma), a seller of pancakes (Piṭṭavve), rice pounders (koṭṭaṇada Ṛemmavve, koṭṭaṇada Sōmamma), a rice gleaner (āyidakki Lakkamma), a sweeper (Satyakka), and a prostitute (sūḷe Saṅkavve).[25] It should be noted that the occupations of the women are all of rather low grade. Apparently, women of higher status did not have an own profession; the low-class women joined their husbands in their trades or had own jobs. It remains questionable whether the wives of the highplaced men were also engaged in some form of kāyaka. However, it is clear that the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa comprised a great variety of occupational activities, both of men and women. In the early hagiographic literature, we find vivid descriptions of the wide range of trades and services. For instance, the Basavapurāṇa relates how Basava offers the skills of all the devotees to the Lord of the Meeting Rivers; because all work is done in his service. It results in the picture of a royal household: including waterman, priest, garland maker, wreath maker, various ritual ministrants, firewood gatherer, forager, cook, kitchen maid, table servants, water carrier, quid supplier, food taster, physician, puppeteer, singer, jester, reader, poet, scholar, musicians, accountant, commander-in-chief, chief minister, chief of the elephant corps, equerry, attendant, pimp, companion, bodyguard, standard bearer, servant, tax collector, dagger carrier, storyteller, nurse, exorcist, timekeeper, lancer, mistress, bondservant, merchant, washerman, lamp carrier, white washer, potter, hunter, blacksmith, herdsman, palanquin bearer, storekeeper, milkman, and milk-boiler.[26] Thus all vocations are performed by the devotees with a distinct goal: the service of the Lord.

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[24] See P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, Dambal-Gadag, 1982, pp. 713-735; S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 13-22, 109-114; T.S. ŚĀMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, Mysore, 1967, pp. 534-556; H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968, pp. 189-190, 257.

[25] See R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, Dharwar, 1968, p. 5; M. CHIDANANDA MURTHY, *Basavanna*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 60; and literature note 24.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Work as Service

Many vacanas deal with the goal of the various vocations. It is obvious that work must not be done for one's own profit, but only as a service to the divine world. Therefore, the worker does not have free disposal of the earnings of his work.

> Nānu ārambhava māḍuvenayyā gurupūjegendu,
> nānu bevahārava māḍuvenayyā liṅgārcanegendu,
> nānu parasēveya māḍuvenayyā jaṅgamadāsōhakkendu,
> nānāvāva karmaṅgaḷa māḍidaḍeyu
> ā karmaphalabhōgava nī koḍuve embuda nānu ballenu.
> Nī koṭṭa dravyava nimagallade mattondu krīya māḍenu;
> nimma sommiṅge savasuvenu, nimmāṇe,
> Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[27]

> I am engaged in cultivating as a worship of my guru,
> I am engaged in business as an adoration of the liṅga,
> I am engaged in serving others as a service to the jaṅgamas.
> Whatever work I do,
> it is you who gives the fruits of the work, - I know that!
> The wages you have given, are for you,
> I do nothing else with it.
> I shall add it to your wealth, I swear it,
> *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.*

Basava makes clear that all vocations must be performed as an act of worship. The occupational activities are divided into three categories, analogous to the Vīraśaiva triad of guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama. Agriculture, business, and manual service: it is all done with a spiritual purpose. The earnings of work must be spent according to this spiritual nature of the vocation. The poet emphasizes that all proceeds are given by God and thus do not belong to men. Since the enjoyment of the fruits of labour is nothing but grace, man is obliged to give back these fruits. Basava swears that he will not withhold anything that belongs to the Lord. He shall give all the wages, earned by his work, to this end: which means in practice to support the needy members of the Vīraśaiva community, and in particular the wandering monks, the jaṅgamas. Donations to the jaṅgamas and aid to the poor fellow devotees are the usual means to transform work into worship.[28] Consequently, we find in the line about the jaṅgamas the concept that is most closely connected in Vīraśaiva tradition with the vocational ideal. Basava says that his work, particularly manual service to others, is 'service to the jaṅgamas', 'dāsōha'. The two terms 'kāyaka' and 'dāsōha' are bracketed together in the Vīraśaiva ethics of work. Dāsōha is the result and the purpose of kāyaka. Devotees are engaged in the performance of a vocation, so that they can make donations to the religious mendicants. While working they should only focus on their duty and not pay any attention to gurus or jaṅgamas; but, afterwards, they should give their earnings to the jaṅgamas. Certainly, a vocation is practised in order to attain the union with the divinity, as we have seen before; but such a union is only imaginable if the worker dedicates the fruits of his work to a spiritual purpose. Work has no worth if the earnings are not given away. And a gift has no worth if it is not from what is earned by the effort of a vocation.

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[26] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basava Purāṇamu* II (trl. pp. 81-82); cf. BHĪMAKAVI, *Basava Purāṇa* VIII.

[27] BASAVA, 708 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 233-234; IYENGAR, pp. 10, 59; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 72; UMASHANKAR, p. 47).

There are several vacanas, in which the concept of service, dāsōha, is explained. Especially the following poem of Basava is an important text.

Janma janmakke hōgalīyade 'sō'haṃ' endenisade,
'dāsō'haṃ' endenisayyā.
Liṅgajaṅgamaprasādada nilava tōr̤i baḍukisayyā,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, nimma dharma.[29]

Let me not pass from birth to birth,
let me not say: 'I am He',
but let me say: 'I am a servant'.
Show me the nature of liṅga's and jaṅgama's grace,
and save me, *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers*,
so I pray you!

Basava prays to be liberated from the cycle of rebirths, into which the sins of his former lives have brought him. The interesting aspect of this vacana is that Basava chooses between two ways to liberation. He rejects the way of the philosophy of advaita which aims at a realization of the union with the Absolute through knowledge, by contemplating the doctrine of monism. The various monistic schools of thought were rather popular in Karnataka in the time of Basava; because the influence of Śaṅkara, who lived three and a half century earlier, has largely determined philosophical understanding during the following ages. The core of Śaṅkara's teachings was that man must realize in himself the basic unity of the soul and the Absolute 'by the declaration 'I am Brahman''.[30] Basava, however, rejects this teaching as human arrogance; and he prays not to be tempted to say: 'I am the Absolute'. Formulating this, Basava does not use Śaṅkara's impersonal expression; but he prefers a more theistic term which is already found

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28. See also BASAVA, 150, 201, 229.
29. BASAVA, 833 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 278; IYENGAR, pp. 37, 49). Other vacanas on dāsōha are: BASAVA, 207, 208, 246, 458, 522, 778, 803, 935.
30. 'ahaṃ Brahmeti vākyena', ŚAṄKARA, *Laghuvākyavṛttiḥ* 13. About Śaṅkara: M. HIRIYANNA, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Bombay, 1973, pp. 339-382.

in the Upaniṣads: 'I am He', 'sōhaṃ'.[31] Instead of this 'sōhaṃ', Basava prays to be able to say 'dāsōhaṃ', that is: 'I am a servant'. Not the realization of a fundamental unity with the godhead, but dedication to the service of the Lord is the way to liberation for him. Therefore, he appeals to the mercy of God, that he may experience the divine grace. This grace becomes concrete in the sacred gifts to the believers after the liṅga-worship or in the almsgiving to jaṅgamas. Thus, service, dāsōha, results in the receiving of the gifts of grace, prasāda, and, in this way, the devotee knows that his work puts him in contact with the divine world.

The theme of service, dāsōha, is also found in the vacanas of many other twelfth century poets. Cannabasava describes the service as a characteristic of the saints of former ages who showed the way to the mystical union.

Āvāva pariyalli, āvāva bhāvadalli,
guruliṅgajaṅgamakke dāsōhava māḍihenemba, kūḍihenemba
sadbhaktara bāgila tōṟi badukisayyā.
Ellavanoppasi liṅgajaṅgamavenna prāṇēśvara
emba mahāpurātanara pādarakṣeya hottirisennanu,
Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēvā.[32]

Save me by showing me the gate of the true devotees,
who performed service to guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama
in various ways, in various attitudes,
and attained the union.
Let me carry on my head the sandals of the great ancient saints, saying:
the lord of my life is liṅga and jaṅgama, who make everything beautiful,
O Lord of the Lovely Confluence.

By putting the words 'various ways' and 'various attitudes' in the first line, the poet emphasizes the diversity of the ancient saints. They had their own, different mystical ways and their own, different spiritual attitudes. Nevertheless, they all had one thing in common: the service to guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama; and directly connected with this service is the attainment of the ultimate union. Cannabasava prays, just as Basava did in the previous text that God may show something to him so that he be saved. What Cannabasava wishes to be revealed is the gate, the way of life, of the ancient saints. The Śaiva saints of former times, notably the sixty-three nāyinārs, have proved to be on the right way; because they attained salvation. The poet wants to go the same way, apparently the way of performing service, in order to reach the same goal. His adoration of the ancient saints even goes so far that he is prepared to perform the most humble homage to them in the service of liṅga and jaṅgama.

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[31] Cf. *Īśopaniṣad* 16:

'Pūṣannekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya vyūha raśmīn samūha tejaḥ |
yat te rūpaṃ kalyāṇatamaṃ tat te paśyāmi yo sāvasau puruṣaḥ so'ham asmi ||
O Pūṣan, sole seer, controller, sun, offspring of Prajāpati,
move away your rays, hold your dazzle,
that I may see You in your noblest form;
whosoever that Person is, I am He.

[32] CANNABASAVA, 115.

However, not all vacanakāras in the Kalyāṇa community attached the same importance to the service and its spiritual results. Especially the vacanas of Allama must be taken into consideration; because they show a somewhat different standpoint that has been of great influence in the Vīraśaiva tradition. First, we look at a text in which dāsōha occurs again in combination with the concept of sōhaṃ.

Praṇite ide, battiyū ide;
jyōtiya beḷaguvaḍe tailavillade prabhe tānelliyado?
Guruvide, liṅgavide;
śiṣyana sujñānōdayavāgadannakkara bhaktiyelliyado?
'sō'haṃ' embuda kēḷi, dāsōhava māḍadiddaḍe
atigaḷeve Guhēśvarā.[33]

The lamp is there, the wick is there,
but if the lamp should shine: how can there be light without oil?
The guru is there, the liṅga is there,
how can there be devotion
until the light of wisdom has gone up in the disciple?
One who has heard 'I am He', but does not perform service,
he is despicable, *O Lord of the Caves.*

The metaphor in the first lines is clear. For light, one needs not only a lamp with a wick, but also the oil that feeds the flame. Similarly, a spiritual aspirant needs not only a guru and the liṅga; he must also possess true wisdom which is able to arouse real devotion. The poet means that only one who knows about the reality of the divine world can experience contact with that world. But mere possession of knowledge is of no avail. It must bring about activity in the disciple; and, therefore, Allama says that the message of monism has to lead to service. The disciple who has heard and understood the words 'I am He', sōhaṃ, must subsequently dedicate himself to service, dāsōha. Unlike Basava, Allama does not reject the monistic way in which the adept tries to realize the already existing unity with the godhead. For him, dāsōha is not another way than the way of sōhaṃ. He wants only to stress that spiritual knowledge is not just a theoretical value, but that practical motivation is intrinsic to it. The disciple who goes the way of monism cannot back out of his obligations to service. But performing service, however useful and necessary it might be, is not a way to liberation in the eyes of Allama.

Consequently, Allama values dedicated service lower than Basava, Cannabasava, and many of their fellow vacanakāras. Allama opposes the emphasis on service as a means to come into contact with God. In some texts, he is very determined about this and even seems to deny the worth of service. He asks: 'What is the use of doing service, if you are joined with the jaṅgama?'[34] The ultimate goal is union with the

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33. ALLAMA, 78 (cf. ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 54; MAHESH, *Le bhakti yoga de Akkamahadevi*, Paris, 1977, p. 57; PURANIK, no. 30).
34. ALLAMA, 887: 'Jaṅgamadalli sannahitanāgi dāsōhava māḍi phalavēnayyā?'

divine; and, in his view, service has no function in attaining that goal. This becomes obvious in one of his vacanas, which has become well-known.

> Annavanikki nanniya nuḍidu
> aṟavaṭṭigeyanikki keṟeya kaṭṭisidaḍe,
> maraṇadinda mēle svarga uṇṭallade
> Śivana nijavu sādhyavāgadu.
> Guhēśvarananaṟida śaraṇaṅge āva phalavū illa![35]
> Feeding people, telling the truth,
> giving refreshments to travellers, building cisterns,
> - you deserve a place in heaven after death,
> but you will not attain the reality of Śiva.
> The devotee who knows *the Lord of the Caves*,
> does not need such fruits.

Allama mentions some popular acts of charity: in the first place, serving food to poor people; and also giving trustworthy information. Many people practised these forms of charity. But also greater projects are indicated. There were individuals or institutions who invested their money in larger charitable undertakings, such as the resting-places for travellers where water and free consumptions were made available. And a vital investment for the welfare of a village or town was the building of a water tank in which rain water was kept for use in the dry season. There were several devotees in the Vīraśaiva community who were well-known for their activities in this field. In particular Siddharāma was famous for his philanthropic projects. He is said to have built numerous tanks and wells and to have set up many resting-places along the roads. According to the Śūnyasampādane, Allama's vacana was actually spoken to Siddharāma in order to warn him for involvement in charitable enterprises instead of spiritual deepening. The latter was just engaged in building a cistern; but Allama laughed at such a project and ridiculed his efforts with this text. Allama is convinced that performing good works will give an appropriate reward: the merit will surely bring you into heaven. However, this law of work and merit (karma) is in his eyes only a mechanism on a rather low level. It has nothing to do with the real mystical achievement, which transcends the sphere of works and rewards. The devotee who has gained true knowledge of the divinity does not need any fruits of his activity. His actions have become void of self-interest, so that they do not produce any karma. Siddharāma is said to have been convinced by Allama's critical remarks; and, consequently, he distanced himself from the charitable projects. Dedicated service remained a topic in the teachings of Vīraśaivism; but, because of Allama's criticism, it remained always a little bit suspect in the eyes of many adherents.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Danger of Property

Opinions about the worth of dedicated service might differ to some extent among the vacanakāras; but all agree that an egoist dealing with the fruits of labour is highly improper. They reject absolutely

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35. ALLAMA, 811 (cf. ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 44; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 47; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 167; *Śūnyasampādane* III:5).

the accumulation of property for own pleasure. Consequently, the vacanas contain many warnings against the temptations of wealth. Basava says for example:

Hāvu tindavara nuḍisabahudu;
garahoḍedavara nuḍisabahudu;
sirigara hoḍedavara nuḍisalu bāradu nōḍayyā!
Baḍataṇavemba mantravādi hogaloḍane
nuḍivarayyā, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā![36]

If they are bitten by a snake, you can make them talk;
if they are struck by an evil planet, you can make them talk;
but, look, if they are struck by the evil force of wealth,
you cannot make them speak!
Once the exorcist Poverty comes along,
they will speak, *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers*!

Wealth is treated here as a demonic power which can take possession of someone. It may be compared with other extraordinary forces which can attack people. A snake can come from the underworld and harm people with his poisonous bite. And, from the sky, an evil planet can exert harmful influence on a person. However, if someone is bitten by a snake or possessed by a planetary spirit, he is aware of his dangerous situation. He can be questioned about it; and he will tell what happened to him. But someone who is possessed by the evil force of wealth is not aware of the dangerous situation in which he lives. As a result, he cannot speak about it; and if someone asks him about it, he will bluntly deny that he is possessed. Only if the tide turns and he finds himself in needy circumstances, then he will speak; and it will come out what had happened to him. Therefore, Basava calls poverty an exorcist: a reciter of powerful formulas who is able to dispel demonic forces. He does not mean that poverty is desirable in general; but people who are possessed by the lust for property can be healed by poverty, so that they henceforth deal in wiser way with their earnings. Basava himself spent his considerable resources in the service, dāsōha, of the religious community. It is obvious that he suspected any accumulation of property among his followers; because he regarded the desire for wealth as a dangerous enchantment.

The danger of desire is a common topic in the vacanas. It is not only the greed for money that is criticized, but several aspects of desire are generally mentioned together, as in the following poem of Basava.

Diṭa puṭa bhakutisampuṭa nelegoḷḷadāgi -
ṭimbananāḍisutiddittayyā ninna māye;
ṭīvaka ṭembananāḍisuttiddittayyā ninna māye.
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvayyā,
honnu heṇṇu maṇṇu tōr̤i![37]

Because they have no firm foundation for the jewel case of devotion,
your illusion makes people dancing to her fiddling,

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[36] BASAVA, 132 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 44; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 45; ARYA, p. 19; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 75; IYENGAR, p. 26; KALIDASS, p. 26; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 77; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 47; UMASHANKAR, p. 14).

[37] BASAVA, 18 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 9).

your illusion makes them dancing to her ting-a-ling fiddling,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
showing gold, woman, land!

In the last line, we find the three temptations for which the poet wants to warn the devotees. It is the temptation of wealth, both in the form of money and in the form of landed property, and the desire for other women. In Kannaḍa, three words are used which have a certain similarity of sounds: 'honnu, heṇṇu, maṇṇu' - gold, woman, and land. It is a standard expression which occurs rather frequently in vacanas that deal with the theme of temptation.[38] Basava lays the emphasis on this euphonic expression, which was obviously easy to memorize, by putting it at the end of the poem as a kind of conclusion. The whole text is apparently meant to impress on his audience the danger of these three temptations. A special way of expressing serves this goal too. The poet describes the force of the divine illusion, being personified in the enticing Māyā. She makes people dance to her piping. The music of Māyā should probably be conceived as the playing of the tambūri, a kind of guitar. And it is the plucking of the strings of this instrument that can be heard in the words of the vacana. Basava produces this effect by using open syllables ('bhakti' becomes 'bhakuti') and at the beginning of the syllables often lingual consonants, with a preference for the rare 'ṭ'. The words 'ṭīvaka ṭembaṇa' are most probably just an onomatope of the sound of the instrument.[39] Meaningless words like these were used by musicians who chanted them as a support for the rhythm of their music. The poet expresses thus the illusion which puts people in motion. The first line of the poem gives the reason why man is vulnerable to the enchanting power of the divine illusion. Basava compares the human mind with a jewel box for the valuable treasure of devotion. Since most people lack a safe place for the jewel case of devotion, they can be easily come into the grip of temptation. Therefore, they must be warned about the dangers that lie in wealth and women. This vacana is an expression of that admonition, which is also found in the works of most of the other vacana authors.

One of the most beautiful poems in this category is a famous text of the great woman vacanakāra Akka Mahādēvi. She gives with a touching simile a picture of the desire for earthly riches in which man can be entangled.

Teraṇiya huḷu tanna snēhadinda maneya māḍi,
tanna nūlu tannane sutti sāvante
mana bandudanu bayasi bēvuttiddēnayyā.
Enna manada durāśeya māṇisi
nimmatta tōr̤ā Cannamallikārjunā.[40]

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[38] Especially in the work of ALLAMA: 21, 72, 91, 743, 898, 899, 900, 901, 1316, 1317. See also BASAVA, 309, 715.

[39] See KITTEL's dictionary.

[40] AKKA, 32 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 85; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 48; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 10; MAHESH, p. 123; PATIL, p. 12; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 116; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 5).

Like the silkworm that spins its cocoon out of its inner self
and gets inwrapped in its own thread, and dies, -
so I am burning up with desire for all what comes to my mind.
Break this greed of my mind,
and show me the way out to you, *Lovely Lord of the Jasmines.*

The poetess feels that she is caught up in her activities which arise from her desiring mind. She compares herself to a silkworm that spins a cocoon. The little worm is absorbed in its activity by an inner urge and does not realize that it means the end of its life as a worm. Akka emphasizes this by a refined mixing of Kannaḍa and Sanskrit words.[41] In the first line, one word stands out because it is the only Sanskrit-derived word between all the original Dravidian words. It is the word 'snēha' which means both 'secretion from the body' and 'attachment, friendship, love'. The silkworm produces the thread for its cocoon from a secretion that hardens in the air. This biological process is described; but, at the same time, the word 'snēha' hints at the spiritual process which is meant by the use of the simile. The vacana deals with the effects of attachment to worldly affairs. Even the silkworm can be seen as destined by attachment; because it is caught up in its activities and does not see whereto it leads. Akka feels that she is captivated in the same way by what is hidden in her inner self. Her mind spins the threads of desire for all kinds of worldly pleasure, in which she will be completely wrapped up, without realizing that such a process will lead inevitably to her destruction. Therefore she prays that the Lord may break this cocoon of desire so that she will find her way out to his world, just as a butterfly comes out of the cocoon of the silkworm. Akka makes clear in this lovely poem how she distrusts every engagement in worldly affairs. She fears that people will become entangled in the desire for success and wealth; and, hence, are irretrievably beyond redemption. This fear is expressed particularly in the ascetic tradition in Vīraśaivism, besides Akka notably by Allama and Siddharāma.[42] They tend to withdraw from all worldly affairs and free themselves from every bond of trade or property. Basava, however, does not preach withdrawal from the world, although he warns the devotees about egoistic motivations which will bring damage to their spiritual development.

The Twelfth Century - Concluding Remarks

When Max Weber explored the 'magical garden' of Hinduism in order to prove that capitalism could not have originated in India, he was struck by the rationalist course of the Vīraśaiva movement which became evident in its puristic approach.[43] Indeed, Basava and his companions distanced themselves from the traditional values, which forbade the undertaking of new enterprises and obstructed almost every kind of social mobility. Members from all castes were welcome in the Vīraśaiva community; and, consequently, most professions were represented among them. No distinction was made between the followers on the basis of occupation, and all sorts of work were valued equally.

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[41] See A.K. RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp. 46-47.

[42] See e.g. AKKA, 115, 131; ALLAMA, 91, 107, 743, 1317; SIDDHARĀMA, 55, 56, 57, 58, 298.

[43] Max WEBER, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Bd. II, Tübingen, 1972, p. 335 (English translation: *The Religion of India*, New York/London, 1968, p. 305).

The concept of kāyaka denotes the religious significance of professional duties, especially of manual labour. An occupation was regarded as a calling, not unlike the Calvinist view; and no contact with the divine world was held possible without such a vocation. By the performance of one's profession, man came into contact with the godhead, according to the Vīraśaivas. It could even be stated that the vocation itself was, therefore, nothing less than heaven (kāyakavē kailāsa). The traditional Hindu ranking of professions was abolished; because every acceptable occupation could have this kind of spiritual function.

Closely connected with the concept of kāyaka was that of dāsōha, service. The vacanakāras emphasized that the earnings of labour must be given away, in particular to the religious mendicants, the jaṅgamas, but also to the poor and needy members of the own community. Following a vocation was only considered to be effective if the wages were given away as a service to the community. And the only gifts which could be regarded as meritorious were those arising from the result of own labour. Thus, dāsōha was both the purpose and the result of kāyaka. This ethical teaching brought about great solidarity and charitable activity in the early Vīraśaiva community.

It meant likewise a certain levelling of income within the community. Poor people profited from the system of charity; whilst rich people were prevented from enlarging their property. Here we find a clear difference when compared with the occupational ethic of the Calvinist puritans, as described by Weber. Whilst the latter used the earnings of their vocation primarily for the increase of their productive capacity and regarded their success as a divine blessing, the Vīraśaivas remained very critical about any enlargement of property and stressed the duty to give away every surplus. They regarded wealth as a dangerous force that could easily hold people in its power and distract them from the spiritual way. The more ascetic śaraṇas even tended to distrust every engagement in worldly affairs; and, sometimes, they also made critical remarks about charitable activities. However, the mainstream in the Vīraśaiva tradition attached great value to the vocation and its result: service to the community.

The Fifteenth Century - Śūnyasampādane

Now we turn to the fifteenth century in order to investigate how the teachings of early Vīraśaivism developed in the course of history. Three centuries after the revolutionary events at Kalyāṇa, Vīraśaiva authors gave their interpretation of these teachings in the authoritative compilation of the Śūnyasaṃpādane. We have seen in the previous chapter that, apparently, caste was not a theme anymore in this compilation. It is even more remarkable that the topics of the equal value of all kinds of labour and the duty to service are still evidently present in the Śūnyasaṃpādane. Throughout the book we find allusions to these teachings and there are three chapters which are largely devoted to the themes of work and service. We will focus on these three chapters.

The third chapter of the Śūnyasaṃpādane describes the meeting of Allama and Siddharāma. The former travels through the country and when he comes near the town of Sonnalige (Sholapur), he sees Siddharāma and his disciples engaged in building cisterns, resting-places for travellers, temples and temple towers. The authors of the Śūnyasaṃpādane leave no doubt that Allama distrusts such charitable activities; because they state that he speaks to the philanthropists in a ridiculing way ('viḍambisuva'). Allama laughs at people who are thus obsessed by worldly dynamism; and he criticizes especially their project for building 196,000 temples to Śiva. A vacana about the human body as the true temple illustrates this point. And, in contrast to the cisterns being built by Siddharāma and his men, Allama speaks about the spiritual tank which he himself has built by his ascetic practice. The conflict culminates in a terrible insult, when Allama inquires whether 'Siddharāma the Mason' ('Oḍḍarāmayyanu') is there. The latter's disciples are upset and attack the criticaster with stones and stakes; but he appears to be invulnerable and they only hurt themselves. Then Siddharāma comes on and displays his magical power by opening the flashing eye on his forehead. But Allama is not impressed by the fire from this mystical eye; because he himself is able to create an even more terrible flame from the sole of his foot. Thus, Siddharāma has to acknowledge the mystical power of the stranger and, humiliating himself, he greets him as a divine visitor. A long discussion in vacanas is set up between the two saints, in which the main topic is the right attitude towards the divine world. Allama repeats his conviction that temples are of no use; because God is everywhere and man can realize his presence in his own body. According to him, God cannot be reached by action ('karma'), of whatever charitable kind it might be. Therefore, Siddharāma should leave behind him the building of temples and cisterns. Finally, Siddharāma gives in; and he is prepared to transcend all dynamism of the mind in order to attain the union with God. However, he is still not unhappy with his former building activities, for:

> Kere toṟe dēgulaṅgaḷa kaḍeyinda nimma kaṇḍe,
> eḍahuva kalla tegeva maṟeyalli
> nidhānava kaṇḍante. .....[44]

> Since I was focused at cisterns, canals, and temples,
> I discovered you,
> like one discovers a hidden treasure
> by lifting a stone on which one stumbles. .....

In the context of the Śūnyasaṃpādane, the vacana means that charitable activities are no more than a preliminary stage of the spiritual way. Something unexpected, such as Siddharāma's meeting with Allama, must take place before true illumination can be attained. Originally, the vacana might have expressed a more positive evaluation of good works; but in the milieu of the Śūnyasaṃpādane, it is Allama's interpretation of service that has become predominant. Basava's ideas about service as a way to meet God are faded into the background here.

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[44] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* III:131 (SIDDHARĀMA, 583; cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 213).

Nevertheless, we find in the Śūnyasampādane repeated admonitions to follow a vocation (kāyaka) and to give the earnings of one's work away as service (dāsōha). These activities are not so much regarded as a way of liberation; but, certainly, they cannot be missed as the expression of a genuine spirit of devotion. The twelfth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane is devoted to the story of Āyidakki Mārayya, the rice gleaner, and his wife Lakkamma. The chapter opens with the vacana of Mārayya that contains the famous words 'kāyakavē kailāsa' - the vocation is heaven. He is said to have uttered this text in the assembly of devotees under the chairmanship of Allama. In this assembly, Mārayya explains in several vacanas the doctrine of dedicated work and service. Guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama have to yield to the vocational duty; because such work is heaven itself. Working in the right spirit means not to ask too much for your effort, but rather to be satisfied with underpayment. Annoying people and begging should be avoided absolutely, and even the lowliest service must be performed without regard to any desire for gold, women, and land. The compilers of the Śūnyasampādane make Allama questioning this engagement in vocational activities, since it would obstruct spiritual development. In his answer, Mārayya admits that the ultimate goal of spirituality is only reached if all self-awareness has faded away; but, for the time being, he has to depend upon the congregation of śaraṇas; and daily service is an integral part of the community life. However, Mārayya gives in to Allama's objections by relativizing the significance of his daily labour, stating that he owes his mystical experience only to the fellowship of the saints and not to his work and service. Again, Allama's understanding of dāsōha is given here; but, nevertheless, the value of kāyaka is stressed as a necessary part of the devotional way of life. The role of explaining this topic is attributed in the Śūnyasampādane to Mārayya's wife Lakkamma. The story, as transmitted by the composers of the Śūnyasampādane, is that the woman bursts into the meeting of the saints and sends her husband to his work. She reproaches him with the neglect of his vocational duties; and it appears that she does not value the discourses in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' very much. At least, her point is that mystical discussions should not be held at the expense of the performance of kāyaka; and she blames her husband with the words:

Kāyaka nindittu hōgayyā ennāḷdane.
Bhāva śuddhavāgi mahāśaraṇara tippeya tappala akkiya tandu,
niścaisi māḍabēku Mārayyapriya Amarēśvaraliṅgakke.
Bēga hōgu Mārayyā.[45]

Work is at a standstill, my master, go!
With a pure mind we must gather rice grains
at the bottom of the dunghills of the great devotees
and offer it accurately to *the Immortal Lord Liṅga, dear to Mārayya.*
Go, Mārayya, quick!

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[45] *Śūnyasampādane* XII:11 (LAKKAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu,* 70; cf. R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Work as Worship in Vīraśaiva Tradition', *JAAR,* Vol. 50, 1982, p. 610).

The surprising interaction between the woman and her husband will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Now, we will deal mainly with the interpretation of vocation which is expressed in the poems of Lakkamma. Repeatedly, it is stressed that work must be done with a pure mind; which means that all desire for wealth must be banned. The sole motivation should be to gain one's daily livelihood and to devote a part to God in the form of offerings to the jaṅgamas. Therefore, it is told in the Śūnyasaṃpādane that Lakkama becomes angry when her husband, sent to work by her, comes back in his enthusiasm with a double portion of rice grains which he gathered in the courtyard of Basava's rich estate. She taunts him with his greed; because all excess income is nothing less than greed in her eyes. Such a covetous attitude might be normal in the sphere of the kings, but it is not appropriate for devotees, according to Lakkamma; because God does not care for enrichment. She also states that earning too much is a kind of begging, for the wages are not in proportion to the effort and thus do not form a just income. Only those proceeds which are gained by earnest labour are acceptable in the eyes of God. Consequently, it is dangerous to be involved in any greedy kind of work, which might provoke a punishment from heaven. It is also a token of distrust in the divine providence; because true devotees do not need to worry about their livelihood, as God will look after them. The only thing to worry about is the performance of one's duties; and, therefore, it is related explicitly in the Śūnyasaṃpādane that Lakkamma critcizes Mārayya when he expresses his wish to attain the ultimate union with the godhead. She ridicules his craze for heaven and points him to his duty: as long as there is work to do, one should not long for heaven! It is her conviction that God can already be encountered in the performance of dedicated work and service. The story of the Śūnyasaṃpādane continues with a practical example of service given by Lakkamma. She instructs her husband to invite a large company for dinner: the innumerable great saints and the 196,000 jaṅgamas that lived at Kalyāṇa. Although Lakkamma and Mārayya are poor people, she is able to prepare a sumptuous dinner for all the guests, serving each one dishes to his taste. Thus, Lakkamma demonstrates how, in a spirit of true service, everything can be achieved. It is especially her confidence in the providence of the godhead that is brought forward in the exposition of the Śūnyasaṃpādane. A characteristic poem on this theme is:

Mana śuddhavilladavaṅge dravyada baḍatanavallade,
cittaśuddhadalli kāyakava māḍuvalli,
sadbhaktaṅge etta nōḍidaḍatta lakṣmi tānāgippaḷu,
Mārayyapriya Amarēśvaraliṅgada sēveyuḷḷannakka.[46]

Lack of money is only for him who has an impure mind,
but concerning the true devotee who follows his vocation with a pure mind:
wealth comes to him spontaneously from wherever he looks,
as long as he is serving *the Immortal Lord Liṅga, dear to Mārayya*.

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46. *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XII:36 (LAKKAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Sivaśaraneyara vacanagaḷu*, 91).

The most curious story about work and service in the Śūnyasaṃpādane is doubtless the myth of Nuliya Candayya, related in the fourteenth chapter. The greater part of the Śūnyasaṃpādane consists of vacanas from the twelfth century with only limited linking text; but, in this chapter, the narrative is more extensive. Obviously, the fifteenth century authors wanted to report the remarkable story of Candayya's devotion; but they were not able to compose it with the help of vacanas. Therefore, the chapter opens with a long prose text. It is told that Candayya was a rope-maker: hence, he was called Nuliya Candayya (Candayya of the rope). He was a zealous member of the devotional community at Kalyāṇa; and he performed his vocation as a service (dāsōha) to the jaṅgamas. He did his work in a disinterested spirit; and he sold the ropes which he fabricated for a low price. With the proceeds, he bought articles which he offered to the jaṅgamas after which he received the gifts of grace (prasāda) for his livelihood. One day, he went out as usual in order to fetch grass for rope making. When he was cutting the grass, the personal liṅga that he was wearing slipped from his body and fell into the water. Candayya, however, was not inclined to use his working hours for something other than his vocational duties: he left his liṅga behind, walking away with his grass. Then, the liṅga came to the surface and called its owner: 'Hey, Candayya, I too am coming!'; but Candayya told him that he was not interested and that he was only concerned about the delay in his work for the jaṅgamas. The liṅga assumed a human shape and started to follow Candayya, calling: 'I am coming, do not leave me behind!'; but the rope-maker's answer was even more harsh: 'First you go away and now you come back; I do not want you anymore!' But the liṅga did not give up and wrapped itself in the skirt of Candayya's garment and refused to stay behind. Finally, Candayya sent the liṅga to Mācayya the washerman who was doing his job also outside the town, with the order to swear before Mācayya that it would also perform service. Only then was Candayya prepared to take his liṅga back. It is on this point in the story that the composers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane start to quote vacanas. Mācayya and Candayya discuss the spiritual value of labour in several poems. After twelve vacanas, the narrative is continued. It is related that Candayya took his liṅga back on condition that it would participate in his occupation of rope-making. After the next vacana, a longer prose text is inserted which describes the later events in the rope factory. Candayya sent his liṅga out with a load of ropes to be sold. The liṅga went to Basava's house and received the enormous amount of a thousand gold coins for the ropes. But, when the liṅga came back at the factory, Candayya became angry and suggested that it had stolen the money. Two of Candayya's vacanas are inserted which explain that only honest labour for a just price is acceptable for God. Then, the story is resumed: Candayya sermonized his liṅga and sent it away. The liṅga went to Mācayya's house, which enables the compilers to insert two of the latter's vacanas together with one of Candayya. It is told that Mācayya brought Candayya and his liṅga to the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience'; there, in the presence of all saints, the liṅga gave back the gold coins to Basava and Candayya got the opportunity to explain the value of the vocation. His teaching is expressed in six vacanas. These texts reflect a strong work ethic and a remarkable awareness of the spiritual value of labour. The rope-maker argues that God will not be impressed by those who work for the sake of gain. The vocation must be performed with a pure heart and man must give all his energy to his occupational duties. Then, it will be a higher form of worship than the veneration of the liṅga. Moreover, Candayya considers every aspect of his own labour as a symbol of mystical experience:

Saṃsārasāgarada madhyadoḷage beḷeda
hoḍakeya hulla koyitandu,
mattamā kaṇṇa tegedu kaṇṇiya māḍi,
ihaparavemba ubhayada gaṇṭanikki tudiyalli,
māṭakūṭavemba manada kuṇikeyoḷage kāyakavāyittu.
Idu kāraṇa Candēśvaraliṅgavemba bhāvavenagilla.[47]

'I cut the elephant grass
that grows in the midst of the ocean of rebirth,
and then, cutting out the nodes, I make a rope.
At the end, I tie a double knot which is called 'this world and the other'.
And in the loop of the mind, called union through work,
there emerges the vocation!
Therefore, I have no attention for the *Liṅga of the Lovely Lord.*

Every element in this allegorical verse has a spiritual meaning. The strong elephant grass stands for the passions by which men are caught in the cycle of rebirth. His work is cutting the grass; and thus the passions are destroyed. Then he has to cut out the nodes in the grass-stalks; the word used for nodes means originally 'eye' and it indicates the eye of the ignorant which is enchanted by illusion. By removing that eye there comes a connection between man and God, symbolized by a rope. The double knot is a simile for the mystical union of the two realms, heaven and earth. And, finally, the loop in the rope is the spiritual awareness of the devotee. In this loop emerges real kāyaka; and engagement in such a vocation makes attention for liṅga-worship needless. It becomes abundantly clear that, for Candayya, the performance of work is the only and sufficient way to attain the union with God. The authors of the Śūnyasampādane agree with him about the significance of the vocation, but they do not want to give up the rituals in connection with the personal liṅga. Therefore, they sketch a discussion in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' about this topic. Notably Allama stresses the value of the liṅga as an indispensable element of true spirituality; and, finally, Candayya gives in. For our subject, there is, however, one most remarkable episode in this part of the chapter. According to the fifteenth century text, Candayya remarks to Allama: 'When you tell me that even a guru, a liṅga, and a jaṅgama are bound to service (dāsōha), do you not need it too?'. And a vacana is included which repeats that even a guru, a liṅga, and a jaṅgama can be saved only through a vocation ('kāyakadindave').[48] So it is the rope-maker's conviction that everybody, even the greatest saint, has to perform a vocation as a way to liberation. And the composers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane confirm this by quoting a vacana of Allama about perseverance in daily practice. The radical work ethic of Candayya is thus validated by these fifteenth century authors with the only restriction that liṅga-worship may not be neglected.

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[47] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XIV:24 (NULIYA CANDAYYA).
[48] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XIV:30.

The Fifteenth Century - Siddhaliṅgēśvara

The vacanas of Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara, the other important work from the fifteenth century, do not add very much to the exposition of the Śūnyasampādane about labour and property. Siddhaliṅgēśvara is obviously not interested in the subject of vocation: he has not written any texts about kāyaka. There is only one vacana in which he declares that begging is not in accordance with a spiritual life.[49] However, the dangers of property constitute a common theme in the vacanas of this author. Repeatedly, Siddhaliṅgēśvara admonishes the devotees not to become a victim of attachments to the world; and he warns them in particular of the greed for earthly possessions. In this connection, he uses several times the standard expression 'honnu, heṇṇu, maṇṇu' - gold, woman, and land.[50] A very interesting text on this topic is the following vacana:

Guru liṅga jaṅgamava bhaktarendu guṇakathanava nuḍidukoṇḍu
emage anyadaivavillavemba
sōr̤eya baṇṇada aṇṇagaḷu nīvu kēḷibhō.
Nīvar̤iyadirdaḍe nā hēḷihe kēḷibhō.
Heṇṇondu bhūta; maṇṇondu bhūta; honnondu bhūta.
Heṇṇu nimmadembiri; maṇṇu nimmadembiri; honnu
nimmadembiri.
A̱vē prāṇavāgi sāvutta huṭṭuttippiri.
Ā bhūta nimma hiḍidu, hisuki kondu kūgi,
tindu tēgi, hīri hippeya māḍi gār̤u māḍutippavu kāṇibhō.
Avu nīvu hiḍidu kīrtisutirdu
emage anyadaivavillemba
kunnimanujara meccuvane,
Mahāliṅgagurū Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[51]

Listen, you brothers, coloured like a bottle-gourd,
you say that you are devotees of guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama
and you talk about perfection,
saying: 'we do not have other gods'.
If you are ignorant, listen to what I am saying!
Woman is a demon, land is a demon, and gold is a demon.
You say: 'the woman is mine, the land is mine, the gold is mine'.
Since they are your life, you die and are reborn.
That demon seizes you, squeezes you out,
and, shrieking, it kills you,
it devours you till it belches,
it sucks you out, leaving only pulp;
look how it destroys you.
Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord,
does He like you doggish people

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49. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 467 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 268).
50. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 118, 217, 285, 305, 306, 471, 472.
51. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 306 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 182).

> who cling to those [demons], praise them, and yet are saying:
> 'we do not have other gods'?

The poem describes the demonic power of desire which threatens even pious devotees. There are 'brothers', members of the Vīraśaiva community, who are possessed by the demon of desire. Siddhaliṅgēśvara concludes this from the way in which they speak about their women, their land, and their gold. They claim that those are their belongings; and, thus, their words betray that they are in the grip of desire. Such worldly attachment results in rebirth: they are not yet predisposed to the ultimate liberation. The poet pictures the destructive working of desire in the horrifying simile of a devouring demon that revels in the destruction of man. So far, it is a rather traditional admonition as it could be expected in the ascetic circles of this author. However, Siddhaliṅgēśvara gives this admonition a surprising turn when he blames the desirous people for betrayal of the monotheistic faith. His argument is that you cannot claim to believe in only one God, if you are apparently under the spell of the demonic power of desire. Regarding woman, land, and gold as one's belongings is reprehensible because it proves that one acknowledges other gods, next to Śiva. Such reasoning is rather common in the monotheistic tradition of Christianity and Islam.[52] It is very remarkable to find it here in a monotheistic movement in Hinduism.

The Fifteenth Century - Concluding Remarks

Concerning the evaluation of labour and property, the fifteenth century authors show a clear conformity with the vacanakāras of the initial period of Vīraśaiva history. In the Śūnyasampādane, we find the same stress on kāyaka and dāsōha as in the vacanas of Basava and his contemporaries. The elaborate treatment of the stories about the rice gleaner Mārayya and his wife Lakkamma proves that the message of vocation as heaven was still considered to be a main item of Vīraśaiva ethics. Moreover, the equal value of all professions is definitely advocated in the presentation of this couple with its humble occupation. Also the close connection between vocation and service is emphasized in the chapter about the rice-gleaning couple. This theme is presented in an even more radical fashion in the curious stories about Nuliya Candayya, the rope-maker, with his living liṅga. The fifteenth century authors are obviously concerned to relate these stories about the value of dedicated work in detail. The differences between Candayya's rejection of the personal liṅga in favour of work, on the one hand, and Allama's plea for liṅga-wearing, on the other hand, are apparently still a matter for debate in the fifteenth century. The composers of the Śūnyasampādane seem to agree with Candayya that it is a necessary condition for the attainment of the ultimate union to perform a vocation, even for jaṅgamas. But they refuse to draw the conclusion that liṅga-wearing could be given up if only dedicated work is performed. They express in this chapter also the Vīraśaiva conviction that only honest labour for a just price is acceptable for God, and that the purpose of labour is service. However, the account of the meeting between Allama and Siddharāma shows that service must not become a goal in itself, according to the fifteenth century authors.

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[52] In the *Gospels* we find wealth described as a god, Mammon, and it is said that 'no servant can be the slave of two masters', see e.g. Matthew 6:24. In Islam, indulging in wealth is sometimes regarded as a form of 'shirk', i.e. attributing companions to God. See e.g. in the *Koran* the parable of the rich winegrower, sūra 18:32-44.

The story about Mārayya and Lakkamma makes clear that wealth is conceived as a divine gift. But any property, and especially affluence, can be a danger to the devotees as well; and following a vocation is certainly not meant to increase the worker's property, but to enable him to perform service to the jaṅgamas and the needy members of the community. This theme is found in the Śūnyasampādane, but even more conspicuously in the vacanas of Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara who warns the devotees repeatedly for the desire of wealth. This author, who belongs to an ascetic school, reflects the traditional fear for worldly attachment, that has always been present as an undercurrent in Vīraśaivism.

The Colonial Period - a Pluralistic Community

The sources from the twelfth and fifteenth century picture a Vīraśaiva community which consisted of people from various castes with various occupations. Typical for the Vīraśaiva work ethic was that all professions were considered to be of equal value. And it was stressed in their writings that everybody should be engaged in work for a fair payment and that accumulation of wealth was reprehensible. Now, it is interesting to see, how these typical Vīraśaiva notions return in the descriptions of the community as found in the records from later times, particularly the nineteenth century.

We saw already in the first chapter, that the Vīraśaiva community was actually a conglomeration of castes, dominated by the priestly class of jaṅgamas and the descendants of the original converts. Now, we shall record the occupational structure of this caste conglomeration. We start again with the data from Francis Buchanan's detailed travel accounts. The author travelled through the southern parts of present Karnataka in the years 1800 and 1801. His reports about the Liṅgāyatas can be summarized as follows.

Castes associated with Vīraśaivism according to
Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807

name (Buchanans spelling parenthesized)	subdivisions	traditional occupation	actual occupation (other than traditional)
1.Pañcama Baṇajiga (Pancham Banijigaru)	several	none	priests, traders, many other professions
2.Jaina Baṇajiga (Jaina Banijigaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	traders	

3.Karṇāṭa Dēvāṅga (Karnata Dévángas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	weavers	farmers
4.Telugu Dēvāṅga (Teliga Dévángas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	weavers	farmers
5.Sēṇigāra (Shaynagaru)	a.jaṅgamas b.laymen	weavers	farmers
6.Pañcāḷa (Panchálas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	goldsmiths, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, coppersmiths	
7.Jyōtiphaṇada Gāṇiga (Jotyphanada Ganagaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	oilmakers, who deal largely in that commodity	
8.Sāle (Shalay)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	weavers	
9.Pākanāḍi Jōgi (Pacanat Jogies)		collecting, preparing, selling, and exhibiting of plants used in medicine	begging
10.Golla (Gollaru)		money transporters	cultivators, village militia
11.Kuñca Okkaliga (Cunsa Woculigaru)	a.Śaiva, but no liṅga b.Vaiṣṇava	cultivators	serving in native militia
12.Lālagoṇḍa (Lali-Gundaru)	a.liṅgawearing b.Vaiṣṇava	farmers, bullock hirers, gardeners, builders of mud walls, traders in straw and other small merchandise	
13.Bhēri (Bheri)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	dealers in bullion, cloth,cotton,drugs, grain	porters
14.Kuruba (Curubas)	a.Haṇḍe Kuruba (Handy Curubaru) b.Kuruba (Curubaru proper)	shepherds, blanket weavers	militia; cultivators as farmers, as servants, and as gardeners
15.Biḷīmagga (Bily-Mugga)		weavers	dealers in cloth or grain, farmers
16.Pañcama Kumbāra (Panchama Cumbharu)		all are potters	

17.Gaṅgaḍikāra Okkaliga (Gangricara Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	cultivators	
18.Sādaru Okkaliga (Sadru Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava d.Jaina	cultivators, both as masters and as servants, native militia	traders in grain
19.Noṇaba Okkaliga (Nona Woculigas)	a.liṅgawearing b.Śaiva, but no liṅga c.Vaiṣṇava	cultivators	
20.Śivācārya Okkaliga (Siv' Achárya Woculigas)		cultivators	
21.Reḍḍi (Ruddy)	a.Śaiva, but no liṅga b.Vaiṣṇava	cultivators	porters, small traders in grain

Buchanan's data reveal some interesting aspects of the division of occupations among the Liṅgāyata castes. Most castes have retained their traditional profession, although in many cases a part of the caste members has chosen another occupation; but that is not unusual in the Indian setting. Remarkable, however, is the special position of the first group of Liṅgāyatas, called by Buchanan the Pañcama Baṇajigas. Many of them earn their livelihood by trading, as their name of 'Baṇajiga' indicates (Baṇajiga = vaṇijaka = merchant). However, their community is characterized by a huge diversity of occupations. Actually, there are hardly any restrictions in this respect; and Buchanan states that although many are traders, 'they may however follow any profession, except such as belong to the most disgraced casts'.[53] Here we see the core of the Vīraśaiva community, most probably the descendants from the original converts of the twelfth century, as they themselves claim to be. Originally an assembly of people from various castes, they had become one distinct caste. But the variety of occupations had continued and in practice they could follow every occupation. There was one restriction: the most impure occupations were forbidden for them. And that shows that the original rejection of impurity had not persisted. On the other hand, in the time of Buchanan, it was still possible for all Pañcama Baṇajigas to become jaṅgama; a separate priestly class had not yet come into existence. The original Liṅgāyatas had surrounded themselves with numerous castes of varying status and occupational activity. Noteworthy is the number of castes that had weaving as their traditional occupation. There were, of course, also several cultivating castes; whilst many people from other castes had also taken up farming as their means of existence. A few castes were specialized in trades that were not followed by others, such as the artisan caste of the Pañcāḷas and the Kumbāras, who were potters. Those castes strictly adhered to their traditional occupations.

[53] Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, p. 237.

The variety of occupations is even greater in the accounts of the Gazetteer of Bijapur District of 1884. It presents a very compartmentalized community with a refined occupational structure. The detailed data from this district, in which the Liṅgāyatas had a dominant position, enable us to get a more thorough picture of the development of the Vīraśaiva movement.

Castes associated with Vīraśaivism in Bijapur District according to the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Bombay, 1884

name	subdivisions	occupation
TRUE LIṄGĀYATAS		
1.Jaṅgama	a.Virakta	a.mendicants
	b.Sāmānya	b.priests
	c.Ganācāri	c.lower priestly functions, messengers
	d.Maṭhapati	d.supplying bilva-leaves, etc., corpse dressers
		c. and d. hold rentfree lands
2.Śīlavanta		goldsmiths, merchants; may become Jaṅgama
3.Baṇajiga	a.Hoḷeyācebaḷaki	merchants
	b.Dhūḷapāvada	merchants
	c.Calageribaḷaki	farmers, shopkeepers, moneylenders; all may become Jaṅgama
4.Pañcamasāli		cultivators, husbandmen; may become Jaṅgama
AFFILIATED LIṄGĀYATAS		
5.Ārebaṇajiga		farmers, some merchants, a few village headmen
6.Calavādi		heads of processions, masters of ceremonies; some girls become prostitutes (basavi)
7.Catura		makers and sellers of blouse-cloth
8.Gāṇiga	a.Kārekula b.Sajjana	a. and b. oil-pressers and cultivators
9.Gavaḷi	a.Liṅgāyata b.Marāṭi	a. and b. cowherds and milkmen
10.Haṇḍe Vajīra		blanket weavers (formerly: shepherds)
11.Haṇḍeyavaru		husbandmen, often also village watchmen or temple ministrants (formerly: fishermen)
12.Kalāvanta		dancers, prostitutes
13.Koṣṭi	a.Biḷējāḍa b.Padasalagijāḍa	a. and b. weavers of sheets, robes, etc.

14.Kuḍavakkaliga	a.Daṇḍāvati b.Miṇigadika c.Taḍḍodi d.Yattiraka	all cultivators
15.Kumbāra	a.Lāḍa b.Liṅgāyata c.Marāṭi d.Paradēśi e.Telugu	all subdivisions: potters and some husbandmen
16.Kurusāli	subdivisions acc. to original castes	bastards who follow the profession of their parents
17.Kuruvinaseṭṭi		traders, mostly grocers
18.Mālegāra	12 subdivisions	florists, gardeners
19.Nāgalika		thread dyers, husbandmen (formerly: sewers)
20.Nādiga	a.Liṅgāyata b.Marāṭi c.Rājapūta d.Sajjana	all barbers and shavers
21.Nīligāra	none	indigo dyers, a few cultivators
22.Padasāli		weavers
23.Śivācāri		weavers

HALF-LIṄGĀYATAS

24.Cikka-kuruvinavaru		weavers of coarse cotton cloth, husbandmen (formerly: traders)
25.Ḍōra	none	tanners and leather workers, some also firewood gatherers and cultivators
26.Gurava	none	religious ministrants, stitchers of leaf plates, astrologers, fortune-tellers, husbandmen, musicians
27.Haṭagāra		weavers of cotton and silk
28.Heḷava		beggars, field-labourers, some husbandmen
29.Kabbēra	a.Bārikēra b.Kabbēra	a. and b. husbandmen, ferrymen
30.Parit		washermen, some husbandmen
31.Sāli	a.Padmasāli b.Sukusāli c.Sakkulasāli d.Dēvasāli e.Padasāli f.Samasāli g.Śuddhasāli	all subdivisions: weavers of cotton cloth, some husbandmen, a few moneylenders
32.Samagāra	a.Aresamagāra b.Liṅgada-Samagāra c.Mōcigāra	a. and b. manufacturers and repairers of shoes and sandals c. manufacturers of new shoes and sandals only

The reports from Bijapur district distinguish between no less than 32 castes with an impressing number of subdivisions. All of these castes are characterized by a certain profession, although in many castes a number of members has taken up farming instead of the traditional occupation. In the first place, we find the category of 'True Liṅgāyatas' who are divided into four castes; but this division is described in the Gazetteer as rather recent. All used to be classified in former times as Pañcamasālis (Buchanan's 'Pañcama Baṇajigas'), but people who opted for a stricter observation of religious rules underwent an initiation and formed higher classified castes. In principle, this practice was still possible in the time of the Gazetteer's investigations; but it had become obsolete for men. Only girls who were taken in marriage by men from the higher castes still underwent initiation. It is interesting to note that the higher castes also performed special occupations. The lowest layer of Pañcamasālis was an agricultural caste; but the more observant groups were generally merchants and among the highest grade there were even goldsmiths. The priestly functions were strictly reserved for the caste of Jaṅgamas, but still all 'True Liṅgāyata' boys could in principle be initiated into this caste.[54] It is clear that these original Liṅgāyatas had preserved some of the old liberality in occupational matters. Next to the 'True Liṅgāyatas', we find the large group of castes called 'Affiliated Liṅgāyatas', because they are later admitted into the Liṅgāyata community. Almost all of these castes are strictly bound to one profession. This was mostly the traditional occupation that they performed before their conversion to the Liṅgāyata cult. But, in some cases, the original occupation could not be retained; because it was not in conformity with Liṅgāyata principles. Therefore, we find fishers who have become cultivators, and shepherds who have become blanket weavers. It seems that sewing too was not considered as a proper profession for Liṅgāyatas. In the time of the Gazetteer, there is a tendency to abandon some traditional occupations. It is reported that in the last years many Gāṇigas have given up the dirty job of oil-making and have become farmers. Obviously, this was permitted in the Vīraśaiva community. It is remarkable to find in this category also the barber caste of Nādigas. They traced their origin back to Basava's companion Hadapada Appaṇṇa, the barber, who obviously belonged to the first generation of converts.[55] So it appears that not all descendants of the founding fathers were regarded as 'True Liṅgāyatas'. Those who performed impure occupations, such as the barbers, were not able to maintain an equal position with the others. Moreover, there was still a rather large category of castes with impure traits that were not entitled to all Liṅgāyata rituals and, therefore, were indicated as 'Half-Liṅgāyatas'. Their impurity has sometimes to do with their occupations. Thus, we find in this category tanners and leather workers, washermen, and shoemakers. The latter were even divided into different categories; because those who only manufactured new shoes regarded themselves as higher than their colleagues who also repaired old shoes. The occupational hierarchy, which is so typical of the Hindu society, is apparently also found within the Liṅgāyata community. However, the Liṅgāyatas distinguished themselves by the large range of professions that were accepted in their community. The occupational pluralism from the first period has remained a characteristic of the Liṅgāyatas, even in the colonial period.

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[54] In Dharwar District this was not possible anymore, see *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 106.

[55] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 254.

The Colonial Period - Work and Service

The original Vīraśaiva teachings emphasized the moral obligation of everybody to perform manual labour and to spend their wages in the service of jaṅgamas and needy members of the community. We saw that, in the radical interpretation of the work ethic, even jaṅgamas were not excluded from the duty of labour. The texts of the founding period of the Vīraśaiva movement and the hagiographical stories make it likely that the community was indeed characterized by a strong solidarity and a network of service. It is, however, very difficult to obtain a clear picture of the practice of kāyaka and dāsōha among the Liṅgāyatas in later times, particularly in the colonial period. The missionaries and civil servants who provide us with elaborate descriptions of Indian society, were mostly not able to distinguish the interactional patterns within the various communities. Nevertheless, there are some indications in the various reports of the European travellers that the ethic of the first period was not completely forgotten in later days.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Danish missionary Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg gave a detailed description of the worship of people who had the custom to wear a liṅga on their bodies. He reports how these liṅga-wearing devotees adored their liṅga with various sacrificial rituals in the early morning. Then he mentions that people who were performing these rituals daily had also another custom. If they took their meals, they used to invite one or two strangers and poor people to come to their houses and to share their food with them. Everybody was acting thus according to his means.[56] In this description of the trustworthy missionary, we find an indication that the old teachings of the Liṅgāyatas about work and service were still known and practised.

However, it must be questioned whether the strangers and the poor were the main beneficiaries of the service system. It seems that, for the majority of the people, especially the jaṅgamas were the persons who had to be endowed with the fruits of work. Probably it was the most meritorious act in the eyes of the Liṅgāyatas because the jaṅgamas could give in return the gift of grace (prasāda). The extent of this system of religious gifts is hard to determine, but we know for certain that there was a rather large caste of Jaṅgamas in the nineteenth century, which lived mainly from the gifts of the believers. In Dharwar District, the heartland of the Liṅgāyatas, there were in 1881 among a population of about three hundred thousand Liṅgāyatas not less than

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[56] Bartholomaeus ZIEGENBALG, *Genealogie der malabarischen Götter*, Madras, 1867 [manuscript 1713], pp. 274-275.

39,116 Jaṅgamas.[57] The Gazetteer for Bijapur District gives an interesting account of the various categories of Jaṅgamas.[58] In the first place, there are the viraktas, who have retreated from the society, follow a celibate life of study and meditation, and are travelling from monastery to monastery. They live entirely from the gifts of the people; but they are comparatively small in number. A much larger group is formed by the sāmānya Jaṅgamas or ordinary Jaṅgamas, who are settled in the villages and towns. They are usually married and they perform the rituals for the believers. Especially the conducting of marriages is a source of income for them. Besides, they go begging and some of them have an additional income from agriculture. Next to the ordinary Jaṅgamas there are five categories of Jaṅgamas who live entirely from begging and who are distinguished by the way in which they collect the gifts. There are Jaṅgamas who sit on a tree and ring a bell all day long, the kūginamāritandegaḷu. Then there are those who go begging from door to door while ringing a bell, the pāharedakāyakadavaru. The third category is formed by those who place themselves before the members of the community, standing on a pair of wooden shoes with nails in them, sticking into their feet, and remain in this uncomfortable position until they are paid everything they have asked. They are called muḷḷahāvigekāyakadavaru. Then, there are the tekkikāyakadavaru, who have the curious custom of throwing their arms round men, keeping hold of them until they have been paid. Finally, there are the beggers who attract attention by simulating dumbness, called mūkakāyaka. Apparently, begging had become a generally accepted practice for Jaṅgamas, although the classical vacana literature had forbidden it. And the radical interpretation of the kāyaka doctrine which obligated even jaṅgamas to manual labour, seems to have been forgotten.

Other sources from the colonial period confirm the existence of a large class of Jaṅgamas who had their main income from the act of dāsōha. The Abbé Dubois reports that there are an immense number of religious beggars among the Liṅgāyatas. Mostly they have no other means of subsistence. He mentions also that some of them live in retreat in the monasteries and temples, which refers probably to the viraktas in particular. These monasteries are usually endowed with lands and the monks derive their income from the rents of these lands and the offerings of the devotees.[59] Arthur Steele confirms that the virakta Jaṅgamas often possess substantial property and he reports their habit to make tours through the country, receiving alms and imposing fines.[60] C.P. Brown gives some information about the ordinary Jaṅgamas who function as gurus for the Liṅgāyata community. He states that usually these gurus do not have secular jobs, but subsist completely on the gifts of the believers. There is, however, an interesting exception.

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[57] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 103.

[58] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, pp. 220-221.

[59] J.A. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Delhi, 1985 [manuscript 1821], p. 117.

[60] Arthur STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, Delhi, 1986 [first ed. 1826], p. 99.

Several Liṅgāyata Jaṅgamas are employed by the British civil service as tutors or clerks. It would be unlawful for them to be on the payroll of one of their fellow Liṅgāyatas, but it is accepted that they can earn wages from the British.[61] From all these records, it appears that the Jaṅgamas profited largely from the old custom of dāsōha. This custom made it possible for most of them to live entirely on the gifts of the ordinary Liṅgāyatas. And it seems that many Jaṅgamas achieved a certain prosperity under this system. At least the virakta monasteries and the head monasteries of the gurusthaladas have mostly become large landowners in the colonial period. It is, therefore, not surprising that several gurus developed into great landlords and moneylenders, which was not always favourable for their morality. About one of them, it is even told that he did not flinch from increasing his income by 'a little discreet usury'.[62]

The Colonial Period - Concluding Remarks

From all accounts, it becomes apparent that the Liṅgāyata community retained its occupational pluralism, which was so typical of the initial period. Notably among the descendants of the first converts, it remained possible to choose from a wide range of possible occupations. The castes that were later included in the Liṅgāyata fold usually retained their original caste profession; at least, if it was not inconsistent with the ethic of their new religious community. However, Basava's emphasis on the equality of all occupations had gradually lost its impact on the community. Together with the reassumption of the caste hierarchy, the Liṅgāyatas proceeded again to distinguish between higher and lower occupations, as in the rest of Hindu society. Those who were styled as 'True Liṅgāyatas' could not anymore perform occupational duties that were traditionally considered to be impure, as the example of the barbers shows. Moreover, in the districts where the Liṅgāyatas dominated, we find at the end of the nineteenth century a further splitting up into castes which were also characterized by special occupations. Trading and cultivating 'True Liṅgāyatas' formed their own castes; and, finally, even the priestly class of Jaṅgamas tended to become a closed caste. The Jaṅgamas still had great advantage from the old teachings about work and service. Many Liṅgāyatas took it as a moral obligation to donate a part of their income to the priestly class. The radical interpretation of the kāyaka doctrine, which wanted the jaṅgamas also to perform labour, was obviously not followed anymore. The situation in the nineteenth century shows a certain perverting of the old ideals of service, which had never meant to create a wealthy caste of priestly landlords. Nevertheless, the doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha remained a vital part of the Liṅgāyata ethic; and, as a result, charity has always kept a place in the Liṅgāyata way of life.

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61. C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, pp. 149-150.
62. Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, p. 288, about the head of the Ujjaini maṭha.

Post-Independence India - Occupational Variety

Finally, some information must be added about the developments in the Liṅgāyata community during the latest period of Indian history, from Independence up till the present day. As in the preceding period, we find a variety of occupations among the Liṅgāyatas; but there are some differences as well. Anthropological studies reveal some interesting developments in this connection. In the previous chapter, we saw that the Liṅgāyata community is still a conglomeration of different castes with its own characteristics. The village studies, connected with the 1961 census, gave a good impression of the plurality of the Liṅgāyata community, particularly the data from three villages in the northern districts.[63] Now we focus on the occupational aspects of this caste structure. We repeat the data from the three village studies, completed with the traditional occupations of all Liṅgāyata castes in those villages.

Liṅgāyata castes and their traditional occupations in three villages (with number of households), according to the *Census of India 1961*[64]

Chiksindgi (Bijapur District)	Hunnur (Bijapur District)	Hulkoti (Dharwar District)
Baḍagi (1 hh) *carpenters*		
	Baḷegāra (1 hh) *bracelet makers*	
Baṇajiga (17 hh) *traders*	Baṇajiga (49 hh) *traders*	Baṇajiga (16 hh) *traders*
	Biḷījāḍa (58 hh) *handloom weavers*	
Gāṇiga (66 hh) *oil-pressers*	Gāṇiga (172 hh) *oil-pressers*	Gāṇiga [Kāre] (16 hh) *oil-pressers*
Haḍapada (3 hh) *barbers*		Haḍapada (4 hh) *barbers*
	Haṭagāra (164 hh) *handloom weavers*	
Hūgāra (1 hh) *florists*	Hūgāra (10 hh) *florists, leaf-plate stitchers*	Hūgāra (2 hh) *florists*
		Jāḍa (16 hh) *weavers*
Jaṅgama (5 hh) *priests*	Jaṅgama (28 hh) *priests*	Jaṅgama (29 hh) *priests*
Kumbāra (2 hh) *potters*		
Maḍivaḷa (1 hh) *washermen*	Maḍivaḷa (2 hh) *washermen*	Maḍivaḷa (12 hh) *washermen*
	Mālegāra (38 hh) *garland makers*	

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63. See pages 94-95.
64. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 10, 22, 11.

	Mēdara (2 hh) *basket makers* Nāvida [= Haḍapada] (5 hh) *barbers* Nāyaka (1 hh) *hunters*	
Pañcāḷa (2 hh) *artisans*		
Pañcamasāli (7 hh) *cultivators*	Pañcamasāli (26 hh) *cultivators* Reḍḍi (2 hh) *cultivators*	Pañcamasāli (11 hh) *cultivators*
Śivasimpiga (3 hh) *tailors*	Śivasimpiga (7 hh) *tailors* Śivayōgi (1 hh) *mendicants*	Śivasimpiga (1 hh) *tailors*
Liṅgāyata population: 108 hh total population: 208 hh	Liṅgāyata population: 566 hh total population: 998 hh	Liṅgāyata population: 107 hh total population: 521 hh

We see in all of the three villages the usual variety of Liṅgāyata cultivators, traders, oil-pressers, tailors, florists, washermen, and barbers, with respect to traditional occupations. However, the actual professional situation is very different. From all of the three villages, it is reported that most households do not follow the traditional occupations of their castes anymore, except for the cultivators. Actually, cultivation and agricultural labour have become the main vocations in these villages for almost all castes. In Chiksindgi, no less than 198 households out of 208 are engaged in agriculture, most of them as primary occupation, some in addition to other jobs. For Hunnur and Hulkoti, these figures are respectively 649 out of 998 households, and 446 out of 521 households. The traditional professions have been largely abandoned for agriculture. Notably oil-pressing is hardly undertaken anymore by the traditional oil-presser caste of Gāṇigas: only one household in Hunnur (with 172 Gāṇiga households) and one in Hulkoti are still engaged in this industry. In Chiksindgi, where no Gāṇigas are performing oil-pressing, it is told that half a century ago, circa 1910, about ten to twelve households were engaged in their traditional industry; but, later on, most of them switched to agriculture. In Hunnur, most Gāṇigas have become cultivators as well. But a considerable number of them has taken up the primary industry of that village, weaving; and some have become traders, labourers, masons, and servants. The change of profession among the Gāṇigas was caused by the industrial developments. The introduction of kerosene and electric torches reduced the demand for their traditional product, vegetable oil for burning lamps. But they were not the only caste which gave up almost completely its traditional profession. Similarly, the Chiksindgi Kumbāras have abandoned their traditional trade of pot-making; and the Jāḍas of Hulkoti have various occupations, including civil servant, grocer, and owner of a teashop, but none of them is still a weaver. In the larger village of Hunnur, more people tend to maintain their traditional vocation, although we find there also weaving and cultivating Jaṅgamas, trading and serving Haṭagāras, and (recently) weaving Baṇajigas. The service castes are still performing their traditional duties such as tailoring (Śivasimpigas), shaving (Nāvidas), and washing clothes (Maḍivaḷas). But this is not a general rule: the Haḍapadas of Hulkoti might be still barbers; but, in Chiksindgi, only one of the Haḍapadas is functioning as a barber, and that part-time. Obviously, local circumstances determine the choice of occupations to a large extent; and most castes have no particularly strong ties with their traditional professions. This concerns both Liṅgāyata and non-Liṅgāyata castes. It is confirmed by many of the other village studies of the 1961 census. Likewise, non-governmental village studies give a picture of the developments in the occupational activities of the Liṅgāyatas. We give here two examples: one from a rural setting and one from urban life. C. Parvathamma described a village in Bellary District in which the Liṅgāyatas constitute almost half of the population of some 360 households. The strong community is characterized by a unique economic diversity, according to this author. The Liṅgāyatas in the village are priests, traders, clerks, teachers, cultivators, tailors, potters, barbers, and washermen. Around 1960, when the fieldwork was undertaken, the traditional distribution of occupations was still largely functioning. The Baṇajigas were mostly engaged in trade, especially in groceries; and the Pañcācāras were for the most part farmers. The Jaṅgamas had their priestly functions; the only Kumbāra family produced pots; and the barber caste was similarly engaged in its traditional occupation. However, only half of the Śivasimpiga households was still performing sewing; and they did so as an additional job, their main occupation being cultivating. Priestly work was certainly not confined to the Jaṅgama caste: there was a Pañcācāra active as priest in a local temple. So, it appears that the traditional occupational system is not imposed strictly on the community; but a certain mobility is possible.[65] In the urban setting, we can expect a greater abandoning of traditional patterns; and, indeed, this is shown in N.J. Bradford's study of the Liṅgāyatas in Mrityunjayanagar, a suburb of Dharwar. This quarter of the town is dominated by the Liṅgāyatas, who account for nearly eighty percent of the population of about 330 households. This rather large community consists mainly of people from villages who came to the town during the last two generations. There are five big Liṅgāyata caste groups: Jaṅgamas, Baṇajigas, Pañcamasālis, Gāṇigas, Baṇṇagāras, and a few small ones, including Haḍapadas, Sādarus, and Hūgāras. The occupational structure is not determined anymore by the traditional rules. Only five out of 34 Jaṅgama households perform the priestly functions. And there is only one oil-pressing Gāṇiga left among 48 households of this caste. The Baṇṇagāras, who were traditionally cloth-dyers, are here cultivators, shop-keepers, and clerks. However, in some cases it

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65. C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 87-94, 110-113; C. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, pp. 67-72.

is possible to connect the present occupations with the traditional pattern. There are many farmers among the Gāṇigas and only very few amongst the Baṇṇagāras. This is probably a result of the fact that Gāṇigas had traditionally much contact with the farmers who provided them with seeds for oil-pressing, whilst they also owned bullocks as working animals for the oil-mills. The Baṇṇagāras were in a less favoured position to start agricultural activities. So we see in this case traces of the traditional occupational structure that determined the life of the Liṅgāyata community for so long. Otherwise, that structure seems to have lost its importance in the urban setting.[66]

Post-Independence India - Work and Service

The early Vīraśaiva vacanakāras propagated a strict work ethic which forced all devotees to undertake labour and to give away the fruits of that labour. This doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha is still very well known in present-day Vīraśaivism. 'Work is heaven' (kāyakavē kailāsa) is still a famous slogan in the Liṅgāyata community. These words are quoted innumerable times by Liṅgāyata authors; and we find them printed on posters and painted on buildings. The most conspicuous place where we can read them is by the Siddhagaṅgā monastery near Tumkur. Here, the slogan is painted in immense letters on the rocks of the hill that rises behind the central school building of the monastery.[67] The modern gurus who try to revive the heritage of Basava, notably those of the virakta monasteries, often emphasize the notions of kāyaka and dāsōha. The following quotations from a book by Śrī Gaṅgādhara of the famous Mūrusāvira maṭha at Hubli may serve as an illustration. The guru encourages his followers to lead a genuine Vīraśaiva life, which includes: 'If you are a Vīraśaiva, you must yield your body to Guru, to Liṅga your mind, your wealth to Jaṅgama; (...) If you are a Vīraśaiva, you must do your duty in the spirit of 'Work is Heaven".[68] That is a classical Vīraśaiva admonition; but the author expresses also in a more devotional way the famous slogan. Thus he reiterates the old Vīraśaiva belief that work is a way to attain divinity. One of his vacanas runs in English translation:

> In this our life of everyday,
> That will not know respite,
> The thought of Thee is irksome, Lord!
> Believing that 'Work is Heaven',
> I have been serving Thee,

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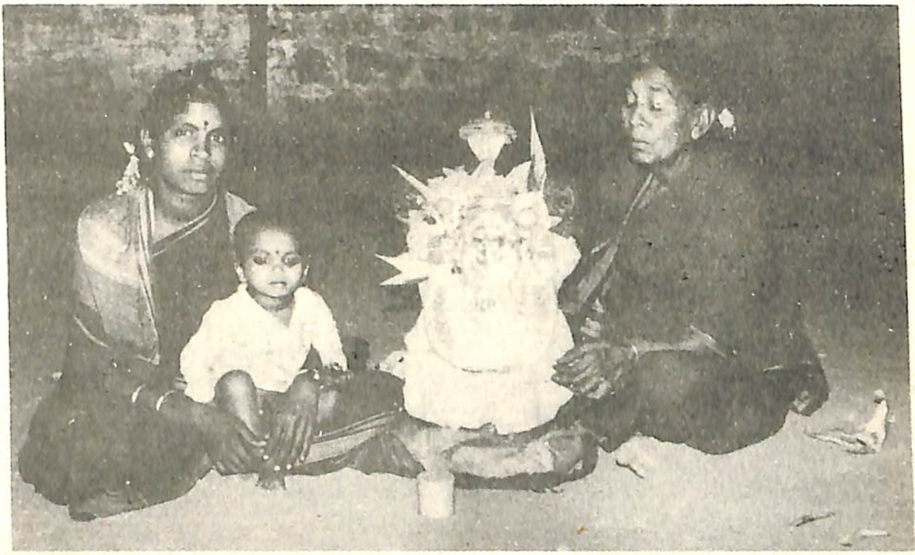
[66] N.J. BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, Brighton, 1976, pp. 23-24, 170-171; N.J. BRADFORD, 'The Indian Renouncer', in: Richard Burghart, Audrey Cantlie [eds], *Indian Religion*, London/New York, 1985, p. 95.

[67] See fig. 7.

[68] GAṄGĀDHARA Rājayogīndra Mahāswāmīji, *Heart's Blossoms*, Hubli, 1974, p. 33. For the exposition of the kāyaka doctrine by other modern Vīraśaiva gurus, see: KUMARASWAMIJI, *Buddha and Basava*, Dharwar, 1957, pp. 105-119; KUMARA SWAMIJI, *Mirror of Virashaivism*, Dharwar, 1960, pp. 97-101; Māte MAHĀDĒVI, *A Guide to Lingayatism*, Dharwar, 1973, pp. 78-91; Lise F. VAIL, *Renunciation, Love, and Power in Hindu Monastic Life*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1987, pp. 68-77 (about Siddhaliṅga svāmi of the Tōṇṭadārya maṭha at Gadag).

7. Two fragments from vacanas painted on the rocks behind the main school building at the Siddhagaṅgā monastery (Tumkur): 'Kāyakavē kailāsa' - 'The vocation is heaven' (Āyidakki Mārayya; see page 106) and 'Dēvanobba nāma halavu' - 'God is one, his names are many' (Basava 613)



8. Begging is not encouraged in Vīraśaivism, but these women are earning a living by exposing an idol of a Vīraśaiva saint in the street

Lord of the blossoming-creeper town,
World-teacher, Founder Gurusiddhēśvara![69]

This text emphasizes that God cannot easily be found in daily life with its own rhythm; but, nevertheless, the duty of devotees is to serve God by performing dedicated work. Such service is inspired by the belief that it is possible to come into contact with the divine world through steadfast fulfilment of work and service. However, the doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha does not only have religious significance; but it is also seen as a valuable contribution of Vīraśaivism to Indian society. This evaluation of the Vīraśaiva doctrine is found repeatedly in the periodical of the Bangalore based Basava Samiti, the Basava Journal. In the last six years, at least nine articles appeared in the modest periodical which dealt more or less extensively with kāyaka and dāsōha.[70] These notions are easy to combine with popular modern concepts like social equality, development, and socialism. The twelfth century moral teachings seem to be quite in line with the values fostered by the leaders of present-day India. Hence many politicians are inclined to refer to Basava and his revolutionary ideas quite often, and it is not too surprising to hear the governor of the State of Karnataka describing Basava as 'a precursor of socialism'.[71] It rarely happens that an author warns of a too literal application of principles that were meaningful in the society of the twelfth century but might not be appropriate in a very different modern setting.[72]

From the foregoing, it appears that the doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha is still a living part of Vīraśaiva religion. It must, however, be questioned whether these lofty principles are determining the life of the community very thoroughly. The practice of donating gifts of various kinds to the jaṅgamas is still in vogue, albeit not so much to jaṅgamas in the literal sense, wandering ascetics, who are not very numerous. But the many monasteries still receive large amounts of money and gifts in kind for their religious and social activities. And there are, particularly in the villages, still many men of the Jaṅgama caste who earn their livelihood partly or wholly by performing sacrificial duties. In modern times, it is stressed that dāsōha does not in the first place involve gifts to religious mendicants, but means rather to labour for the benefit of society. A common argument is found in one of Basava's vacanas, in which he states that he is the only devotee and all other devotees on earth are jaṅgamas, representing God in human shape.[73]

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[69] GAṄGĀDHARA, *Heart's Blossoms*, p. 20.

[70] *Basava Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 37-50; Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 21-25; Vol. 10, No. 2/3, pp. 14-21; Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 3-8; Vol. 11, No. 2/3, pp. 10-18; Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 7-9; Vol. 13, No. 1/2, pp. 1-14, 23-33; Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 60-63. Some other articles in these volumes refer also to the doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha.

[71] P. VENKATASUBBAYYA, 'Basava and his message', *Basava Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1988, p. 8 (a speech on the occasion of Basava Jayanti 1988). See also KUMARASWAMIJI's article 'Basava and his Socialism' in his book *Education and Socialism*, Dharwar, 1955, pp. 91-109; the article was written on request of a reporter of the Soviet press agency TASS.

[72] So B.B. KANAVI, 'Basaveshwara and his Economic Thinking', *Basava Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1/2, 1988, pp. 12-13.

[73] BASAVA, 893; cf. MAHĀDĒVI, *A Guide to Lingayatism*, p. 90.

But, in spite of repeated demands for an egalitarian society, the Liṅgāyata community is not particularly known for its practical solidarity with the poor. The only striking characteristic of Liṅgāyata activity is the large number of educational facilities, of which many underprivileged students from within or outside the Liṅgāyata community can take advantage.[74] However, there is another striking feature of the Liṅgāyatas which might be connected with the doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha. There is, in spite of the dāsōha principle, a great disparity in means among the Liṅgāyatas; but, on the whole, the community consists of rather well-to-do people. And that is remarkable in view of the fact that the Vīraśaiva movement started with most of its support from the lowest and economically weakest sections of the society, although there were even in the initial period a number of rich people among the devotees. On average, the Liṅgāyata community enjoyed significant economic progress in the course of the centuries. The village studies which we consulted, picture the Liṅgāyatas almost invariably as the dominant caste regarding possession of land and industrial products.[75] It is quite probable that the principle of kāyaka, which stressed so strongly the value of work for everybody, contributed to this progress. And that would mean that, at least in this aspect, the Liṅgāyatas constitute a parallel with the puritan Calvinists and, likewise, showed an 'elective affinity' with capitalism, as Weber described it.[76]

Post-Independence India - Concluding Remarks

It is a notable development of the modern period that the caste system loses its significance with respect to the choice of occupation. People are not forced anymore to follow the traditional vocation of their caste; although several traditional trades are, in practice, still in hands of certain castes. The Liṅgāyatas, too, are free nowadays to choose their own occupation. For them it is not a radical change; because at least the 'True Liṅgāyatas' were always rather liberal in their attitude towards caste professions. The result is that, in the villages, many people engage in agricultural work; whilst in the towns people are also attracted by a variety of modern professions. The occupational diversity that was so typical of the Liṅgāyata community is, thus, still there; but, at present, it is not anymore a striking characteristic; because most castes have developed a similar diversity.

The doctrine of kāyaka and dāsōha is still a vital part of the Liṅgāyata work ethic. These concepts are gaining more popularity at present; because they harmonize with the modern emphasis on social equality and development. Indeed, the doctrine of dedicated work has brought about a rather strong recognition of labour among the Liṅgāyatas, which might have contributed considerably to their economic progress. Service, especially in the form of gifts in money, has retained an important place in the Liṅgāyata way of life. In particular, the large monasteries receive considerable amounts of money, with which they not only support their religious activities but often display great activity on the educational field. It appears that the revival of the values of the founders has a great significance for the community in the modern situation.

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[74] See chapter 4.

[75] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nos. 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41; see in each study Table XXV or XXI: 'Households owning or possessing Land', Table 12: 'Material Culture - Possession of Furniture', and Table 12-A: 'Material Culture - Possession of Consumer Goods'. See also K.G. GURUMURTHY, *Kallapura*, Dharwar, 1976, pp. 77-79.

[76] For Weber's estimation of Vīraśaivism see page 117.

CHAPTER 3

POSITION OF WOMEN

Now we shall discuss the impact of the Vīraśaiva movement on the position of women. We have seen that Basava and his followers made a major contribution to the betterment of the position of the untouchables. Their resolute rejection of caste, connected with a new recognition of manual labour, meant a real revolution in twelfth-century Karnataka. The preaching against the accumulation of wealth strengthened the position of poor people within the movement and outside. But what was the significance of Vīraśaivism for the position of women? In order to answer this question, we have to examine the sayings of the vacanakāras against the background of their time. It will also be of great importance to obtain a clear picture of the female devotees in the Vīraśaiva movement. And, again, we shall try to sketch the historical development of the ideas and ideals of Basava's reformation, focused on the fifteenth century and the period after 1800.

Historical Background - Different Opinions

The progressiveness of the Vīraśaiva movement is, of course, related to the society in which it raised its voice. It is, however, rather difficult to obtain a clear insight into the position of women in that particular historical situation. Opinions differ widely and they are sometimes even contradictory. Some historians have a very pessimistic view of the chances of women in twelfth-century Karnataka. 'It was a society where women were treated as slaves and chattels,' is the verdict of Sarojini Shintri.[1] On the other hand, there is a trend in Karnataka historiography in which the past of the own culture is eulogized. And, then, quite another picture of the position of women is given. 'Women had an honourable status in society. Not only they were held in high esteem but they participated fully in social life,' writes K.R. Basavaraja.[2]

This remarkable contradiction becomes rather understandable when we look at the sources that are used. The authors who come to a negative evaluation base their judgement on the strength of the classical religio-juridical literature, the Dharmaśāstras. So it is not surprising that they find many data which suggest a miserable and degrading situation of women. The classical ethical prescripts tend to give a very subordinate position to married women and to women in general. The most influential book in this category, the Manusmṛti, contains verses which are explicitly hostile towards women. The lawgiver warns men about women whose nature it is to seduce men (II:213). In a well-known verse, it is stated that a woman always needs protection by men: her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in her youth, and in her old age her sons will protect her; the conclusion is: 'a woman should not have independence' (na bhajetstrī svatantratām, IX:3; cf. V:148). In marriage, a woman should worship her husband constantly as a god; even if he might be unvirtuous, unfaithful or a man of bad habits (V:154). Generally, all kinds of bad qualities are attributed to women in the Manusmṛti: they are created with a predilection for bed, seat and ornaments, with desire, fervour and unreliability, with a hostile disposition and evil conduct (IX:17). The other law books, such as the Yājñavalkyasmṛti, take a similar stand.[3] So, it is not too difficult to present a pessimistic picture of the status of women on the basis of the Dharmaśāstras.

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[1] Sarojini SHINTRI, 'Basava and Womanhood', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara: Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume*, Bangalore, 1967, p. 153. Of similar opinion are: K.N. CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, Poona, 1979, pp. 83-117; SHIVAMURTHY Shivacharya, *Vīraśaiva-View of Man and Woman in Relation to God*, Sirigere, 1985, pp. 14-16; A.S. ALTEKAR, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Delhi, 1973, passim; Pandurang Vaman KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Poona, 1974, pp. 556-598.

[2] K.R. BASAVARAJA, *History and Culture in Karnataka*, Dharwad, 1984, p. 459. On the same line: A.P. KARMARKAR, *Cultural History of Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1947, pp. 106-108; Jyotsna K. KAMAT, *Social Life in Medieval Karnāṭaka*, New Delhi, 1980, pp. 105-130; S. GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, Mysore, 1974, pp. 236-255.

Moreover, some authors seem to have a special interest in depicting the situation of women in the Middle Ages rather negatively. A good example is A.S. Altekar's comprehensive study of the position of women in Hinduism.[4] Confronted with the unsatisfactory role of women in the society of his own days (post-Independence India) he tries to find an explanation for the defects of Hindu civilization and to rediscover long-forgotten values which could be useful to solve present-day problems. In his opinion, the golden age of Hinduism was the Vedic time, dated by him from 2500 to 1500 B.C.. The Ṛgveda is supposed to reveal that men and women were absolutely equal in the realm of religion; girls enjoyed the same education as boys; girls married according to their own choice when they became adults; widows could remarry; and seclusion of women was unknown. The only negative fact was the absence of ownership rights for women, due to the pre-eminence of family property. After this ideal time, however, a gradual deterioration in the position of women is found, especially in the period from 500 B.C. to 1500 A.D. This development is said to have its roots in the growing number of marriages with the ritually unskilled non-Aryan women; as well as in the lowering of the marriageable age for girls which made a sound education impossible. Even high-born women were equated with the low-caste Śūdras; and nothing remained of the earlier equality of men and women. The message of Altekar is, of course, that the values of the ideal Vedic age must be restored. In his line of argument, although supported by valuable historical material, we find a tendency to exaggerate the oppression of women in the Middle Ages as a contrast with the golden age of the Vedas. Male-chauvinist verses in the Vedic literature are relativized as the 'light-hearted cynicism of some poets'; whilst similar texts from the Dharmaśāstras are presented as a proof for the sad situation of women in later time.[5]

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3. See the elaborate exposition by KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, esp. Vol. II, pp. 556-598.
4. ALTEKAR, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*. This study is not very reliable; but it cannot be ignored because it is the most detailed work on the subject and it has exerted great influence in India.
5. ALTEKAR, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 339, cf. p. 326.

Altekar and the other writers who have a negative view of the position of women in the Middle Ages do not assume a difference between the several parts of India in this respect. Their supposition is that, in Northern and Southern India alike, the status of women was determined by the law books.[6] And it is clear that those texts do not indicate any equality of men and women in society.

The opposite position is adopted by some Karnataka historians who seek to describe the specific development of their own culture on the basis of epigraphical material and literary sources. Jyotsna Kamat sums up much data to support her assumption that the status of women in medieval Karnataka was astonishingly different from what the Laws of Manu suggest.[7] In the inscriptions, we come across many important and powerful women: chiefs of villages, rulers of provinces, and even ruling queens. In contrast to Northern India, it was not uncommon in Karnataka for women to exercise political power. There were also famous women in the cultural field; we know the names of female poets, singers and dancers. Even the courtesans, attached to the royal courts or to the temples, are depicted as a proof of the liberal culture in the Middle Ages.[8] The courtesans are said to have held a recognized position, which enabled them to live in a certain luxury. The inscriptions reveal to us the names of several influential religious women as well. Probably under the influence of the Jaina tradition which was very strong in medieval Karnataka, many women made the choice for an ascetic life; and these nuns received general recognition. Then, there are several instances of lay women who became widely known because of their charitable activities, whether or not as a result of religious vows.

It is rather obvious what interest makes these historians stress so strongly the exceptional trends in the history of their own country. When the state of Karnataka was formed in 1956, the identity of its own culture had to be defined. Many historians in the new state tended to over-emphasize the peculiarities of the Kannaḍa tradition in contrast to the classical Northern-Indian heritage and the Tamil-dominated southern culture. They sought to demonstrate that all kinds of evils in the Indian culture were foreign to Karnataka. A certain one-sidedness is inevitable in this process of nation-building. With regard to the position of women, this meant an exclusive attention to the facts which could prove equality of men and women in the medieval regions which now constitute the state of Karnataka.

Historical Background - Some Conclusions

The arguments of the latter category of authors might be biased to some extent; but, at least, they fix our attention upon one important fact. The position of women in twelfth-century Karnataka cannot be described solely on the basis of the religio-juridical literature of the beginning of the Christian era. The epigraphical material clearly indicates that there were women who had a much more influential position in society than the Dharmaśāstra literature ever allowed. On the other hand, many of the inscriptions concern people from the upper strata of the society. And, even then, the reports about female rulers and other powerful women are certainly exceptions that can easily be overestimated. But, at least, this will be true, that amongst the aristocracy women enjoyed a certain freedom; and even the exercise of political power was not totally unattainable for them.

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[6] This viewpoint is presented elaborately by CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, pp. 92-101.

[7] KAMAT, *Social Life in Medieval Karnāṭaka*, pp. 105-130.

[8] The same argument is used by GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, pp. 243-247.

The position of the large masses of middle and lower class women, however, will have been determined to a large extent by the ideology of the classical law. There is no indication that, for those women, the situation in Karnataka was different from other parts of India. The marriageable age for girls was lowered in the course of time to ten years or even less. There was no education for girls; marriage was arranged exclusively by the parents; and the child-brides became normally in short time child-mothers. A married woman had a very subordinate position in the house of her husband's family. Especially in the ritually pure castes, women were not entitled to rituals or to any independent action in society. When a woman of those castes became a widow, her fate was almost unbearable. Some chose the honourable solution of self-immolation on the husband's funeral pyre (sati), as the memorial stones witness. Remarriage of widows was totally forbidden.[9] Low-caste women had the advantage that their social activities were not so much restricted; but, of course, their situation was certainly not enviable.

The courtesans can hardly provide any proof for a liberal society. It is true that the courtesans who were attached to the royal courts lived in a certain luxury and enjoyed a greater freedom than other women. But their position was rather unstable: when they grew old, they lived in rather unattractive circumstances. The girls who were dedicated to temples (dēvadāsis), did not live in poverty for the most part; but the involuntary prostitution connected with such dedication did not make them examples of successful free women.[10]

The only realm in which women had possibilities to act independently was the devotional culture. The influential Jaina tradition brought some change in Karnataka: women had a less subordinate position in Jainism. There were female ascetics who played an important role; and also lay women had more opportunities in Jaina culture to develop religious activities. This must have affected part of the Hindu culture as well. New religious movements with a devotional accent (bhakti) arose: and women found their own place in this revival; although the classical Vedic ritual remained an exclusively male affair.

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9. So even Jyotsna K. KAMAT, *Social Life in Medieval Karnāṭaka*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 121; see also K.N. CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, Poona, 1979, pp. 94-97, 107-110.
10. See Aloka PARASHER, Usha NAIK, 'Temple Girls of Medieval Karnataka', *IESHR*, Vol. XXIII, 1986, pp. 64-91.

Vīraśaivism is one of those bhakti movements. We will now examine the impact of this movement on the position of women. We have seen that the situation of women, especially in the middle and lower strata of society, was very subordinate. The dominant ideology regarded women as inferior beings; and their possibilities in social life were most restricted. Did Vīraśaivism bring about a change?

Twelfth Century Vacanas - against Adultery

In the vacanas of the twelfth-century Vīraśaiva authors, we find many references to intersexual relations. Not all verses on these topics are very spectacular, nor do they all point to a new understanding of the dignity of women. But it is remarkable that there are hardly any vacanas in this period which reflect the classical fear of the seductive and unreliable woman. Men are not depicted as innocent victims of the enchantment of malicious women; but they are admonished to show responsible behaviour. That is already an improvement on the general trend of the classical literature.

The scope of these vacanas is, however, not always the same. The warning against extramarital relations, rather common in the vacanas, is sometimes formulated in terms of property, which is, of course, not an approach kindly disposed towards women. But there is also another trend in which the integrity of women, or the purity of own conduct, seems to be the principle. There are some interesting examples of both categories.

Basava warns in several vacanas against the desire for other women.[11] In a few instances, this warning is connected with the admonition not to covet another's goods. This connection suggests that the wife is seen as a part of one's property, just as it is formulated rather often in the classical law books. A typical example of this connection is found in the following vacana:

Bhaktanentembenayyā
bhaviya saṅga biḍadannakka?
Māhēśvaranentembenayyā
parastrī parararthadāse biḍadannakka? .....[12]

How can I pretend to be a bhakta
unless I break away from the company of worldlings?
How can I pretend to be a māhēśvara
unless I break away from the spell of another's wife and property?
.....

This vacana reflects the pattern of the doctrine of the six phases, the ṣaṭsthala siddhānta. According to this system, the devotee experiences

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11. David EMMANUEL, *A Historical-Critical Study of Basava's Ethical Teachings*, M.Th. thesis, Serampore Univ., 1979, p. 106, states that there are ten vacanas in which Basava speaks about the bevahiour towards other women; but he mentions only nine of those vacanas, viz. nos. 445, 446, 509, 638, 640, 641, 676, 735, and 770. He could have referred also to nos. 263, 389, or 642.
12. BASAVA, 509 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 163; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, pp. 101-102).

spiritual development in six phases. Each phase has its own characteristics and its own moral and spiritual demands. Basava teaches that the first step for the devotee is to dissociate himself from the values of secular life. He must become different from ordinary people who do not recognize the value of spiritual life. That is what makes him a devotee (bhakta). But when the devotee wants to become a master (māhēśvara), he must learn to cope with temptations. Typical for this second phase is the struggle against egoism, passion, and temptation. Therefore, the warning against desire for another's wife and property has its place in this stage. The poem continues with the phase of a prasādi in which one has to conquer all pain; the phase of a praṇaliṅgi who has his breath under control; the phase of a śaraṇa not influenced by the senses; and the final stage of an aikya who is liberated from the cycle of rebirth.

In this vacana, desire for another's wife is tantamount to the desire for the property of one's neighbour. We find the same theme in an extremely well composed vacana of Basava. It has all the characteristics of a perfect vacana: a pithy verse with figurative language, wordplay, and a clear message.

Tor̤eya mīva aṇṇagaḷirā, tor̤eya mīva svāmigaḷirā,
tor̤eyiṃ bō, tor̤eyiṃ bō,
paranāriyara saṅgava tor̤eyiṃ bō!
Paradhanadāmiṣava tor̤eyiṃ bō!
Iva tor̤eyade hōgi tor̤eya mindaḍe,
bar̤udor̤e hōhudu, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā.[13]

O brothers, taking a bath in the river,
O masters, taking a bath in the river,
give up, give up,
give up relations with other's wives!
Give up the desire for another's property!
If you go for a bath in the river
without giving up these,
it is like going for bath in a river gone dry,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers.

The key word in this poem is 'tor̤e' (-'dor̤e') which occurs nine times. The meaning of the word can be 'river', 'stream', but also 'to renounce', 'to abandon'. Basava makes his wordplay with this double meaning. The vacana gives - as many others by Basava - a critical view of the classical Hindu ritual. The bath in the river that is referred to is, of course, the ritual immersion: a ceremony which is performed in order to obtain purification or a certain favour. For Basava, such a ritual is meaningless if it is not accompagnied by moral conduct. So he admonishes the bathing ritualists to abandon their immoral desire for another's wife or property; because, without this renunciation, their worship will be as useless as bathing on a dry riverbed.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the vacana literature has a standard expression to indicate the desire for the wife and property of

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13. BASAVA, 642 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 212; BASAWANAL, SRINIVASA IYENGAR, p. 83; IYENGAR, p. 18; MAHESH, OLLIVIER, p. 66; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 39; UMASHANKAR, p. 41).

another. This expression is: 'honnu, heṇṇu, maṇṇu' - gold, woman, and land. Especially in Allama's vacanas, the term occurs rather frequently.[14] The idea behind those words is that men are most vulnerable in their desire for money, women, and land. Men are enticed by the divine power of Māyā (illusion) who casts her spell with the help of wealth and eroticism.[15] In this line of arguing, women are hardly seen as human beings: they are to be avoided because they are another's property; and they are to be feared as a dangerous temptation. But this is certainly not the dominant idea in the vacana literature. Even the ominous words 'gold, woman, and land' can be used in a different sense.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Inward Temptation

Allama must be credited with the reformulation of the idea that women, money and landed property are seductive forces which must be feared and avoided. His famous vacana on 'honnu - heṇṇu - maṇṇu' points in another direction: it holds a mirror up to man's face and makes him find the source of temptation in his own mind.

> Honnu māyeyembaru, heṇṇu māyeyembaru, maṇṇu māyeyembaru;
> honnu māyeyalla, heṇṇu māyeyalla, maṇṇu māyeyalla.
> Manada mundaṇa āseye māye,
> kāṇā Guhēśvarā![16]

Gold is temptation, they say,
and woman is temptation, they say,
and land is temptation, they say.
But gold is not temptation,
and woman is not temptation,
and land is not temptation.
See, *Lord of the Caves*,
the real temptation
is the desire in one's own mind.

Gold, woman and land are not temptations as such; but they derive their enticing character from the desire in one's own mind. And it is that desire which is the real force of illusion. Not the divine play of goddess Māyā but man's inward urges are responsible for his passionate behaviour. Allama's vacana means a certain disenchantment of worldly existence. Gold and land do not have any enticing force in itself, nor is woman a seductive and frightening being as such.

The warning against relations with other women obtains another character in this way of thinking. Men are not cautioned for the omnipresent traps of the divine illusion; but they are encouraged to control their own passions. The danger is not in seizing another's property, which includes his wife, but in being exposed to impulses of one's own mind.

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[14] See ALLAMA, 21, 72, 91, 743, 898, 899, 900, 901, 1316, 1317. In BASAVA's vacanas only in nos. 18, 309, and 715.

[15] Cf. BASAVA, 18; see pages 115-116.

[16] ALLAMA, 72 (cf. ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 5; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 30; PURANIK, nr. 28; SHIVAMURTHY Shivacharya, *Vīraśaiva-View of Man and Woman in Relation to God*, Sirigere, 1985, p. 15).

In relations with the female sex, man has to prove that he is capable of pure conduct.

However, is this warning only applicable to extramarital relations, or does it also involve an erotic relationship within marriage? The vacanas are not always clear on this point; and it is obvious that there are some differences of opinion among the Vīraśaiva authors. Basava urges no objections against marital intercourse; but some other vacanakāras are more oriented towards ascetism. Especially Allama and Siddharāma are known for their propagation of self-control and renunciation. Both men had already a considerable career of ascetic life behind them before they joined the movement of Basava: and this might be the reason for their position.[17]

The vacana of Allama quoted above could perhaps fit in the traditional warning against other women, although his texts certainly tend towards ascetic ideals for all people, including married couples. Siddharāma, however, definitely advocates an attitude of contenence in the following vacana which is rather similar to Allama's poem.

Heṇṇa hiḍidu heṇṇa bhōgisabāradu;
maṇṇa hiḍidu maṇṇa bhōgisabāradu;
ḥonna hiḍidu honna bhōgisabāradu.
Ī āṇakada bhēdavanārū ar̤iyaru;
adentu bhaktisthaḷavaḷavaḍuvudu,
Kapilasiddhamallikārjunā?[18]

You must not enjoy a woman as woman,
you must not enjoy land as land,
you must not enjoy gold as gold.
Nobody understands the disclosure of this paradox;
how then can you reach the stage of a bhakta?
O Eminent Lord of the Jasmines.

In this vacana, Siddharāma presents a difficult message to the followers of the Vīraśaiva movement. He shows that he is quite aware of this difficulty; because he denotes the content of his verse as a paradox. The exact meaning of the verse is, indeed, rather obscure. 'Who can understand the meaning of this paradox?' is Siddharāma's question; and he does not expect any positive answer. Nevertheless, the attitude propagated here is a condition for entering the first stage of the ṣaṭsthala system. Those who want to become a devotee (bhakta) must cope with the common way of dealing with property and sexuality. But how is the other way? The vacana seems to say that only by doing one can experience a better way of life. Those who have not yet become devotees are not able to understand it or, perhaps: nobody is able to grasp it rationally. But, at least, it is clear that the new attitude transcends the common way of life. One has to give up the usual enjoyment of sexuality and the usual desire for property. This renunciation gives a new relationship towards women and a new position in respect of property. That this new behaviour is presented as a condition for the attaining of the first stage, is very unusual.

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[17] See page 4.
[18] SIDDHARĀMA, 300 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 109).

Apparently, Siddharāma's view is that renunciation is a sine qua non for spiritual development.

If such renunciation should already be effected at the beginning of the spiritual path, it is to be expected that the strictest celibacy is prescribed for the later stages. Indeed, Siddharāma maintains that eroticism should be banned from the life of the spiritual seeker. In particular, he tries to demonstrate that all this has become useless and superfluous for someone who is advanced in religious development. Some of his poems express this view very clearly, for instance:

Śaraṇanādaḍe satiyagūḍāṭavēkayyā?
Indriyaṅgaḷu hariyalēke, tāne sati liṅgave patiyāda baḷika?
Sarvasañyōgakke liṅgave pati, tāne satiyādāta;
anya satiyarigear̤aga.
Karaṇaṅgaḷa hariyalīya, kārpaṇyakkodaga
Kapilasiddhamallikārjunayyana oḍagūḍida śaraṇa.[19]

If someone is a saint,
why should he make love to his wife?
Why this stimulation of the senses,
whereas he himself is the wife
and Liṅga his husband?
A husband for complete union is Liṅga
and he is the [Liṅga's] wife;
he should not attract other women.
Let not his senses be stimulated,
let him not follow his passion
- the saint who is married with
the Eminent Lord of the Jasmines.

The crux in the poem, which makes it fascinating but at the same time difficult to follow, is the metaphor of husband and wife. It is typical of the fifth stage of the ṣaṭsthala system. In this phase, the adept is really becoming a surrendered (śaraṇa) or saint, who lives in community with the godhead. Such an intense community between man and God is often described by the vacanakāras in terms of conjugal relationship. Man is married with the godhead or particularly with the Liṅga. In this figurative language, the Liṅga is the husband; and the adept is his wife. In the above quoted vacana, Siddharāma plays with the well-known metaphor in order to elucidate his message that relations with women are not of any use for the devotee. In the first stage, the devotee had to be warned against the dangerous involvement in eroticism; but the śaraṇa of the fifth stage must obtain a clear insight into the truth of renunciation. If he experiences his relationship with God as the bond of marriage, he will not have any interest in other relations. The saint is completely absorbed by his role as Liṅga's wife; and he will not be unsatisfied in this relationship, for the Liṅga is to him a husband for complete union. So he has sublimated or transcended his earthly passions: and no place is left for former relations.

The ascetic ideals of Siddharāma are not shared by all Vīraśaiva authors. Particularly, Basava, the founding father, is of a different opinion. He does not advocate celibacy or continence; but he gives a legitimate place to sexual enjoyment. According to Basava, the impurity is not in sexuality itself, but in the desire for another's wife. He gives a clear picture of his standpoint in several vacanas, of which the following is probably the most relevant one.

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[19] SIDDHARĀMA, 1175 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 451). See also SIDDHARĀMA, 297, 300, 614.

Indriya nigrahava māḍidaḍe honduvuvu dōṣaṅgaḷu:
munde bandu kāḍuvuvu pañcēndriyaṅgaḷu!
Satipatiratisukhava biṭṭare Siriyāḷa Caṅgaḷeyaru?
Satipatiratibhōgōpabhōgaviḷāsava biṭṭanē Sindhu Ballāḷanu?
Nimma muṭṭi paradhana-parasatiyarigeḷasidaḍe
nimma caraṇakke dūra, Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā![20]

If you suppress your senses, you will get into trouble:
all the five senses will come forward to frustrate you.
Did Siriyāḷa and Caṅgaḷe give up
the pleasures of man and wife?
Did Sindhuballāḷa give up
his favourite enjoyment, the pleasures of man and wife?
I take this vow before You:
if I ever desire another's property or another's wife,
let me be dismissed from your foot,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers!

The opening sentence of the vacana is very convincing: penance is of no use; because it is impossible to curb the senses. On the contrary, the real trouble will start when one suppresses one's senses: the senses will laugh at such an endeavour. The senses will be activated instead of being curbed: suppression will result in frustration. And such renunciation is also unnecessary: to prove that statement, Basava gives the examples of two famous saints who did not neglect marital intercourse. Both examples are taken from the Tamil Śaiva tradition, from the stories about the sixty-three Śaiva saints or nāyinārs. Those stories were very popular in the Vīraśaiva movement; and Basava refers regularly to them. Siriyāḷa and Caṅgaḷe, a pious couple, were tested by Śiva, according to the well-known legend.[21] The god visited them in the disguise of a begging monk; and he asked them to prepare for him as a meal the flesh of their little son. When they obeyed him in this horrible request, they were rewarded with blessings. Basava gives this example to show that even highly-accomplished spiritual seekers can lead a normal family life: they even produced a child. So it is not necessary to abandon marital relations for the pursuit of spiritual perfection. Here, Basava clearly opposes the classical Hindu doctrine of the four āśramas or stages of life, in which family life has its place in the second stage (gṛhasthāśrama), set apart from the stages of spiritual development. His second example from the stories of the Tamil saints is even more interesting for this study. It concerns the legend of Sindhuballāḷa, a

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20. BASAVA, 638 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 211; IYENGAR, p. 18; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 266; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 56; UMASHANKAR, p. 41). See also BASAVA, 263, 389, 446.
21. The legend is told in the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* XLIV: *Ciṟuttoṇṭarnāyaṉārpurāṇam*. It found also a place in some of the early Vīraśaiva hagiographical works: SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* IV (trl. pp. 144-156); BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* XXIII-XXIV. See also pages 37-38.

similar story of a saint tested by the god.[22] Sindhuballāḷa, who enjoyed a very happy marriage, received in his house a wandering monk who was in reality Śiva himself. The visitor wanted to spend the night with the wife of his host; and Sindhuballāḷa, used to give everything to holy beggars, consented. When he entered the sleeping room next morning, the monk had changed into a little child that lay sucking the breast of his wife. The original meaning of the story must have been that a devotee has to renounce everything, including the bonds of love and marriage, in order to reach the divine world. Basava, however, reinterprets the ancient legend: Sindhuballāḷa is surely a model of devotion because of his willingness to give everything to the holy visitor; but the combination of his exemplary devotion and his conjugal happiness has become the kernel of the message. In this way, the story contains a warning against egotistic pleasure; but it emphasizes at the same time the possibility of being both a lover and a saint. In this connection, it is useful to call to mind the family situation of Basava himself. He led the life of a householder, being married with two women; and this poem could also be understood as an apology for his own position, which will not have been taken for granted by everybody. But Basava is quite aware that being a married man does not mean being free to do what one likes. Therefore, the vacana ends with a vow in which Basava stresses the wrongness of the desire for another's property or another's wife. Such a desire would result in losing the fellowship of God. So the conclusion of this vacana is again the warning against adultery which is so typical of Basava's vacanas.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the First Commandment

Cannabasava, too, expresses the admonition not to desire other women. His vacanas are characterized by a specific approach: he is very prone to systematizing and, in particular, moral precepts are classified in his writings. Not all his vacanas have the pithy character of the poems of his uncle Basava: some are long-drawn-out and not very poetical. But there are a number of impressive poems which combine philosophical systematization with poetical expressiveness. The following vacana on conduct and knowledge is a fine example.

Kriyeye jñāna, ā jñānave kriye.
Jñānavendaḍe tiḷiyuvudu;
kriye endaḍe tiḷidante māḍuvudu.
Parastrīya bhōgisabāradembude jñāna;
adar̤ante ācarisuvude kriye;
antu ācarisadiddaḍe, ade ajñāna nōḍā,
Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēvā.[23]

Action is knowledge; and knowledge is action.
This knowledge means to understand,
this action is: acting according to one's understanding.
No lovemaking with other women is knowledge;

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[22] The legend is told in the Tamil *Periyapurāṇam* XI: *Iyaṟpakaināyaṉārpurāṇam*.

[23] CAÑNABASAVĀ, 1087 (cf. R.C. HIREMATH, *Sri Channabasavesvara*, Dharwar, 1978, p. 70).

> to behave like this is [good] action;
> not to behave like this, see: that is ignorance,
> *Lord of the Lovely Confluence.*

In a powerful opening sentence, the poet expresses the kernel of Vīraśaiva ethics: knowledge and action are indissolubly connected. Every action must be reflected action; and true knowledge will always incite to action. Vīraśaivism does not believe in theoretical knowledge which turns people away from the world. Knowledge finds its meaning only in its practical applicability.[24] But knowledge also means understanding: one should not blindly follow traditional lore but gain one's own insight into wisdom. The conclusion of the first part of the vacana is that action must be governed by one's understanding. Next, Cannabasava gives a practical example; and this is very interesting for our subject: the only example adduced is the warning against adultery. Knowledge that leads to right action is, in the first place, not to touch another's wife. And this example is even stressed by the following sentences which declare the rightness of such knowledge. Not to covet another's wife has become the first commandment.

There are more vacanas in Cannabasava's work that give priority to this part of morality. We can see it very clearly in a long text which enumerates no less than fifty commandments. The beginning of this text is:

> Parara heṇṇige kaṇṇiḍadihude ondaneya ācāra.
> Parara dravyava apahāra māḍadihude eraḍaneya ācāra.
> Suḷḷāḍadiruvude mūr̤aneya ācāra. .....[25]
>
> The first commandment is not to set eyes on another's wife.
> The second commandment is not to steal another's property.
> The third commandment is not to tell lies. .....

The first one in this series of fifty commandments is not to desire another's wife. This is all the more remarkable because similar moral catalogues by other vacanakāras never put the admonition against desiring other women in the first place. In Basava's famous 'Seven commandments' the whole item is not even mentioned.[26] It is typical of Cannabasava to stress the warning against adultery so that it receives absolute priority. But the other vacanakāras also render a prominent place to this aspect of morality.

There is a special reason for the repeated warning to behave in a proper way. The movement of Basava must have mobilized large masses of people. And it was a revolutionary movement: many old values were rejected and traditional social bonds were loosened. Supervision by family or caste elders lost its function for the followers of this devotional awakening. Many of them left their homes and joined the spiritual community in Kalyāṇa. Social cohesion had not yet developed strongly in the new situation. Therefore, it is understandable that the leaders took great care to strengthen morality: especially with respect to intersexual relations. Surely, they had to avoid the impression that, in the Vīraśaiva community, everything was allowed. Caste barriers were broken down; unbridled accumulation of wealth was criticized; and traditional privileges were discarded; but it had to be emphasized that anomy was not the new motto. So the vacanakāras were active in admonishing the masses in order to develop a new sense of morality. Sometimes they conformed to traditional concepts, in which, for instance, desire of another's wife and property are put on one line. Many vacanas, however, testify to the attempts to redefine morality and to deepen personal responsibility and purity of motivations. People who joined the new movement had to know that they were expected to develop a new way of life. Siddharāma states it thus:

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[24] In the 20th century, Svāmī Vivekānanda spread a similar message with his concept of 'practical Vedānta' which became very popular in India, cf SCHOUTEN, 'Hinduism and Development', *Rel. and Soc.*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, 1981, pp. 86-99.

[25] CANNABASAVA, 105 (cf. HIREMATH, *Sri Channabasavesvara*, p. 85).

[26] BASAVA, 235; see the next chapter where the moral codes are discussed in detail.

Jñānigaḷu tāvāda baḷika, anyara stōtrakke oḷagāgabāradu.
Jñānigaḷu tāvāda baḷika, guruhiriyarigañje naḍeyabēku.
Jñānigaḷu tāvāda baḷika, anya strī tanna māteyantirabēku,
Kapilasiddhamallikārjunā.[27]

Once you are an adept,
you must not expose yourself to another's praise.
Once you are an adept,
you must respect the guru and the elderly.
Once you are an adept,
you must regard another's wife as your mother,
O Eminent Lord of the Jasmines.

With this formulation ('once you are an adept' - jñāni), Siddharāma emphasizes that joining the Vīraśaiva revolutionaries means to adopt a new value system. When the initiate has obtained the religious knowledge and can be called a jñāni, he must prove that his behaviour is congruent with his knowledge. He must form his own opinion, independent from other people. He must recognize the new authorities of the movement, the guru and the elderly. And he must adopt a new attitude towards women: he has to pay the same reverence to them as to his own mother. Again, it is obvious that intersexual relations constitute a major part of Vīraśaiva ethics.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Adulterous Woman

In this respect, we cannot ignore some striking vacanas in Basava's work which seem to reveal a strong anti-female attitude. In those vacanas, seven in number, women are admonished not to be unfaithful to their husbands or even scolded for adultery.[28] Of course, it is not surprising to find exhortations directed to women next to those meant for men. The exceptional fierceness of the seven vacanas, however, makes a strange impression. An example may illustrate this point.

Ūḍuva uḍisuva gaṇḍaniddante,
jōḍe! Miṇḍaṅge kaṇṇa celluvaḷa
kēḍiṅge ber̤agāde nānu!
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvanu
siṅgārada mūga baṇṇisi haludōr̤e koyva![29]

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27. SIDDHARĀMA, 455 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 164-165).
28. BASAVA, 110, 111, 613, 615, 616, 617, 1180.
29. BASAVA, 617 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 203).

What a surprise -
the ruin of you, you bitch,
making eyes at your lover
whilst you have a husband
who gives you food and clothes.
The Lord of the Meeting Rivers
will chop off your pretty nose
so that your teeth stick out.

It is quite clear that Basava does not show any consideration for the unfaithful wife. Her downfall is not surprising: nothing good can come from a relation with a paramour. She is ungrateful to her husband who provides her with food and clothing. Therefore, the poet threatens her with the traditional Indian punishment for adulterous women: cutting off her nose.

But why such a harsh judgement, whereas Basava is normally not inclined to severe verdicts? Apparently, more is at stake than only the moral shortcomings of a certain woman. The point is that adultery is also a metaphor. The unfaithful wife is an image of the devotee who is not faithful to Śiva but worships other deities as well. And it is this second meaning that causes the unusual hardness of these vacanas. In the eyes of the vacanakāras, and in particular of Basava, polytheism was the most terrible sin. The metaphor to describe this evil is rather obvious; because the relationship of man to God is often compared to marriage. Especially in the exemplary śaraṇasthala, the fifth stage of the ṣaṭsthala system, the adept is depicted as the wife of God; or more precisely as the wife of the Liṅga. Then, it is a kind of adultery to give oneself over to other deities. And it is this devotional adultery that is so strictly condemned in the vacanas. All seven vacanas against adulterous women have this double meaning. Sometimes, it is explicitly formulated as in the opening lines of this vacana:

Nambida heṇḍatige gaṇḍanobbane, kāṇirō:
nambaballa bhaktaṅge dēvanobbane, kāṇirō! .....[30]

For the trustworthy woman there is only one man, you see:
for the faithful devotee there is only one god, you see! .....

It is not always clear, however, whether both meanings have the same importance in a poem. Sometimes, the normal Indian abhorrence of adulterous women seems to be the main motive. Medieval Indian culture had a strong patriarchal character. Men were allowed to have several women; and, generally, extramarital relations were not condemned very severely. But, for married women, there was only one law: obedience to her husband, or in a more appropriate formulation: to her master (yajamānaru). Adultery on the part of the wife was regarded as undermining the foundations of the society. Although the Vīraśaiva movement was characterized by a rather liberal outlook, those ideas were not totally absent. Therefore, it is not strange to find that a figurative language developed in which the adulterous woman became an image of the greatest sinner: the devotee who worshipped other gods. Precisely this popular simile could convince people that participating in other cults was wrong and even dangerous. After all, nobody would doubt that unfaithful women played a dangerous game! In the following vacana, this theme is worked out in a very beautiful manner:

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[30] BASAVA, 616 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 202).

> Hādarakke hōdaḍe, kaḷḷadammavāyittu;
> hāḷu gōḍege hōdaḍe, cēḷūṟittu;
> abbarava kēḷi taḷavāṟa uṭṭa sīreya sulida;
> nāci hōdaḍe maneya gaṇḍa benna bāranettida;
> arasu Kūḍalasaṅgamadēva daṇḍava koṇḍa![31]

I went out for an adulterous play,
but all I got was counterfeit.
Behind a dilapidated wall I hid,
but there the scorpions stung me.
The watchman heard my cries
and he tore off my saree.
I went home in utter shame
and my husband slashed my back.
So *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers*, the king,
took his fine.

The very first word of the poem already sets the tone: 'hādara' means adultery; and it is generally used in a very pejorative sense. So it is not surprising to find that the woman who goes out to meet her lover is faced with all kinds of trouble. The love nest behind the ruined wall is the habitat of scorpions; she is caught and humiliated by the guardsman; and back home she is punished by her husband. Very interesting is the way in which Basava's devotional signature (mudrike) finds its place in the poem. The Lord of the Meeting Rivers is depicted as a king who imposes a fine on the criminal. The meaning of this simile is, of course, that adversity and trouble are not accidental; but they can be seen as a punishment from God. Adulterous behaviour - either in the realm of morality or in that of worship - will have consequences!

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Equality of Men and Women

It is obvious that the attitude towards women was an important item in the Vīraśaiva movement. One of the reasons is that women played an important role in the movement. There were several influential female ascetics in early Vīraśaivism. Perhaps even more important was the role of many women who joined their husbands in the religious revival. In this situation, the classical subordinate position of women could not be maintained. And, in particular, the religious legitimation of such subordination was severely criticized. The new circumstances in Kalyāṇa required a new vision on the relation of men and women. In the vacana literature we can discover the development of these new ideas, which brought about a real revolution.

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31. BASAVA, 111 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 37, RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 75, ZVELEBIL, p. 23). The first line is difficult to translate: MENEZES and ANGADI have: 'Committing adultery / Is an immoral act' (kaḷḷa: thievish, immoral; damma as tadbhava of dharma); RAMANUJAN has: 'I went to fornicate, / but all I got was counterfeit' (kaḷḷa: thievish, damma: an old coin); ZVELEBIL has: 'I went to fornicate - / and almost choked with cough' (kaḷḷe: swoon; dammu: breath). I think that the counterfeit coin gives the best meaning in this poem: this interpretation is also suggested in KITTEL's dictionary.

The situation in twelfth century Kalyāṇa was totally new; but the vacanakāras could make use of a small undercurrent in the religious tradition. Even before Basava, there was a certain tendency in Karnataka Śaivism to give a more positive view of the spiritual possibilities of women than classical Hinduism ever did. The most important thinker in this respect is Dēvara Dāsimayya, the eleventh century forerunner of Vīraśaivism. He wrote several vacanas in which he relativized the difference between man and woman. Weil-known and typical of this author is the following vacana:

Molemuḍi bandare heṇṇembaru.
Gaḍḍa mīse bandare gaṇḍembaru.
Naḍuve suḷivātmanu
gaṇḍū alla, heṇṇū alla,
kāṇā Rāmanāthā.[32]

When breasts and braid are coming,
they say: a woman;
when beard and moustache are coming,
they say: a man;
but the soul that hovers in the midst,
look, it is neither man nor woman,
O Lord of Rāma.

The poem is very simple and hardly needs any clarification. According to Dāsimayya, the difference between man and woman is only outward; but the soul has nothing to do with this physiological appearance: the soul cannot be described in terms of male and female. Also in other vacanas, Dāsimayya expresses his idea of the soul that transcends sexual differences. He gives, for instance, the simile of a bamboo stick that is cut in two parts in order to make fire by rubbing the two parts together: you can call the one part woman and the other man, but the fire cannot be designated like that.[33] In classical Hindu texts, we sometimes find similar views;[34] but it is always a rather theoretical idea about the essential being which transcends the distinctions in the phenomenal world. Dāsimayya, however, is the first to connect this theoretical knowledge with the moral aspect of intersexual relations. His argument is that, when the soul is neither male nor female, the everyday distinctions cannot be of ultimate importance. We do not know what the practical results of this view were for Dāsimayya and his contemporaries. But, at least, a century later, his vacanas stimulated a new orientation in the interaction between men and women.

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[32] DĀSIMAYYA, 133 (cf. HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 108; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 110; SHIVAMURTHY Shivacharya, *Vīraśaiva-View of Man and Woman in Relation to God*, Sirigere, 1985, p. 12)

[33] DĀSIMAYYA, 144.

[34] SHIVAMURTHY, *Vīraśaiva-View of Man and Woman in Relation to God*, p. 12, refers to *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* IV:3, where God is thus described: 'You are woman; You are man. You are boy or also girl. You, when old, stumble with a staff. You, when born, become facing in all directions.' This verse is already found in the *Atharva Veda*: X:8:27. Other possible references are: *Ṛg Veda* I:89:10: 'Aditi is the heaven, Aditi the air; Aditi is the mother, the father, the son. All the gods are Aditi, the five clans; Aditi is what has been born, Aditi is what shall be born', and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I:4:3, which tells about the primeval Person: 'He was, indeed, as large as a woman and a man closely embraced. He made that self falling into two parts. Therefrom arose a husband and a wife. Therefore, this (is true): 'Oneself is like a halved part', as Yājñavalkya used to say. Therefore, this space is filled by a wife.'

The influence of Dēvara Dāsimayya can be demonstrated with the help of several vacanas of twelfth century devotees. One vacana is definitely dependent on one of Dāsimayya's poems and constitutes a clear evidence of his popularity among the emancipating women of the Vīraśaiva movement. Goggavve is one of the female devotees who composed vacanas. She came from the country of Kerala and joined the Vīraśaiva community in Kalyāṇa; but we do not know much about her. Only a few of her vacanas have been preserved. One of them follows closely the example of Dāsimayya: it is an imitation of the vacana quoted above, with a surprising new conclusion.

Mole muḍi bandaḍe heṇṇembaru,
mīse kāse bandaḍe gaṇḍembaru.
Ī ubhayada jñāna
heṇṇo gaṇḍo Nāstināthā.[35]

When breasts and braid are coming,
they say: a woman;
when moustache and loincloth are coming,
they say: a man;
But the knowledge of these two
- is that female or male,
Lord of Nothingness?

The first lines are obviously borrowed from Dāsimayya; but the poetess makes a small improvement. Instead of 'gaḍḍa' (beard), she chooses the word 'kāse' (loincloth), refering to the genitals. This gives not only a much better rhythm; but the words constitute, according to their meaning, a chiasmus, an inverse parallel: mole-muḍi / mīse-kāse (breast-braid / moustache-loincloth). The most surprising aspect of Goggavve's vacana, however, is the conclusion of the verse. Dāsimayya's final statement that the soul is neither male nor female, could be expected after the first lines. But Goggavve makes a more refreshing conclusion with her question whether the knowledge of distinction itself is female or male. True knowledge, indeed, transcends traditional distinctions such as female and male. Paying so much attention to sexual differences reveals a lack of knowledge, seems to be her point.

Through Vīraśaiva preaching, many women discovered the knowledge that man and woman basically share the same existence. And, in this knowledge, gender differences, grown during the ages, were reduced to phenomena of secondary importance. Several vacanas of female devotees demonstrate how radical the acquaintance with the Vīraśaiva movement worked out. The following vacana is a good example, although it shows marks of later revision by the compilers of the Śūnyasampādane. It was originally written by Akkanāgamma, the sister of Basava and the mother of Cannabasava.

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[35] GOGGAVVE, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 190.

Enna bhavada baḷḷiya bēru hariyittayyā,
Saṅganabasavaṇṇana okkuda koṇḍenāgi.
Enna manada kapaṭa hiṅgittayyā,
Cannabasavaṇṇana karuṇava paḍedenāgi.
Ennantaraṅgada sandu saṃśaya tolagittindu
Basavaṇṇapriya Cannasaṅgayyanalli
enna paramaguru Allamāprabhudēvara
śrīcaraṇava kaṇḍenāgi.[36]

The root of my life's creeper was pulled out
when I received the gift of Saṅgama's Basava.
The falsity was removed from my mind
when I obtained Cannabasava's grace.
The doubt that governed my heart, went away
since I found the holy foot
of my highest guru, Allamaprabhudēva,
in the Lord of the Lovely Confluence, dear to Basavaṇṇa.

In this poem, Akkanāgamma expresses the great changes in her life due to the inspiration of the Vīraśaiva leaders. That falsity or illusion disappeared from the mind and that doubts vanished from the heart is clear. But what might be the meaning of 'the root of the creeper of my life'? The creeper is an image of the bondage of karma by which rebirth is determined. According to the general Hindu theory of karma, there is a chain of cause and effect which destines the future of every individual being. The circumstances in which people are born, gender, caste and social environment, are all governed by the amount of merit that was built up in former lives. Bad conduct results in low rebirth: as an outcaste or as a woman or, worst of all, as an outcaste woman. Akkanāgamma was certainly not of low caste: she was Basava's sister; and their family belonged to the Brāhmaṇa caste. Therefore, we may assume that this high-born poetess speaks about her womanhood when she uses the image of the creeper of her life. It is this creeper that is pulled out by the roots because of the efficacious grace of Basava. Akkanāgamma testifies in her poem that her life attained a new dignity in her encounter with the Vīraśaiva gurus.

There are more vacanas by women devotees on this subject. One of the most interesting examples is a poem written by Nīlamma, the favourite wife of Basava. This text clearly indicates that being a woman was considered to be the effect of bad karma. But it also tells us something about the impact of the Vīraśaiva ideas on the position of women.

Ēkenna puṭṭisideyayyā heṇṇujanmadalli, puṇyavillada pāpiya?
Nānu iraparakke dūraḷayyā.
Enna nāma heṇṇu nāmavallayyā.
Nānu siriyidda vastuvina vadhuvāda kāraṇa.
Saṅgayyanalli Basavana vadhuvāda kāraṇa
enage heṇṇu nāmavillavayyā.[37]

O Lord, why did you make me to be born as a woman,
[the fate of] a meritless sinner?

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[36] AKKANĀGAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 165. The vacana occurs also in the *Śūnyasampādane*: XIX:144.

[37] NĪLAMMA, 90.

I am far from such a low existence.
My name is not a female name.
I am a woman but of excellent quality.
The female existence of Basava
in the Lord of the Confluence
does not give me a female name.

The first line explicitly expresses how women regarded their own subordinate position. Being born as a female is the proof that one's previous life was sinful. Only bad karma can be the cause of such a rebirth. Therefore, Nīlamma laments her birth; and she asks whether she has really deserved such a fate. In her own opinion, she is worth more than what fell to her in this birth. She does not want to resign herself to the fact of female subordination; but she stands for her own dignity. The last lines are rather surprising. Her husband has become the Liṅga's wife; but she does not choose in favour of such a female, subordinated position. As we have seen before, one's relation to God is often described in terms of a marriage. Especially in the śaraṇasthala this figurative language is used and the śaraṇa is depicted as the Liṅga's wife. Of course, all vacanakāras agree that Basava had achieved this ideal relationship with God. But for Nīlamma, his wife in secular life, it is not a model, to follow. Her independent position, as expressed in this poem, is a striking example of the new position of women in Vīraśaivism.

On the other hand, the figurative language in which the devotee plays a female role, also has important effects on man-woman relations. The man who has attained a mystical marriage to the Liṅga, is no longer a normal man: he has feminine features. Now, we will fix our attention on this fascinating phenomenon and its social implications.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - the Androgyne Verses

There are several vacanakāras who write about their experiences in the saraṇasthala, where the mystic union with God is compared to a marriage. In this stage, the male devotee regards himself as the wife of Śiva; his relationship with the Liṅga is a marriage in which he is the female, subordinate party. This role is difficult to harmonize with the worldly role of being a husband in a normal marriage, nor with the usual male dominancy in medieval Indian society. The tension is felt strongly in some vacanas. It is difficult - and not in accordance with Vīraśaiva ethics - to make an absolute distinction between spiritual experience and everyday life. But can the devotee be the Liṅga's wife and, at the same time, play the role of a macho? Does the mystical feminine experience also influence human relations? There is a fine and well-known poem about this ambivalence, written by Basava himself:

Ele gaṇḍugūse nī kēḷā, ninagobbagenduṭṭe gaṇḍuḍigeyanu!
Mattomme yānu gaṇḍappenayyā,
mattomme yānu heṇṇappenayyā:
Kuḍalasaṅgamadēvā,
ninage vīranappe, nimma śaraṇarige vadhuvappe![38]

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[38] BASAVA, 703 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 232, RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 87, IYENGAR, p. 59, ZVELEBIL, p. 95).

> Listen to me, dear fellow:
> I wear these men's clothes
> only for you.
> Sometimes I am a man,
> sometimes I am a woman.
> *O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,*
> for you I will be a warrior,
> for your devotees I will be a bride.

It is clear that, for Basava, the mystic marriage to the Liṅga resulted in a strong relativization of gender roles. He is no longer a traditional man, characterized by manly behaviour; but, according to the circumstances, he can assume different roles. His male clothing has become unimportant: his male outlook is only outward appearance. If it is socially desirable he can wear his men's clothes and act as a man. But, in other circumstances, he can play a feminine role as well. The latter even seems to become dominant in human relations within the devotional community. Basava still is the 'vīra', the warrior or hero of Śiva: with true Vīraśaiva zeal, he will attack the despisers of his god; but, to his fellow devotees, he wants to be a bride. The mystic experience has taught him not to behave like a dominant leader, but to serve the devotees in the same way as he serves his Lord. As a consequence, human relations, including man-woman relationships, have changed considerably; and the balance of power in the community has shifted. So, the feminine values, as experienced in marriage to the Liṅga, also have a great impact on social life.

It is rather difficult to gain a clear insight into the feelings and emotions which lay behind these poems. It is called 'the bisexuality of the bhakta' by Ramanujan[39] but I am not convinced of the rightness of this term. In the first place, bisexuality is too modern a phenomenon to be compared to medieval Indian devotional expressions. But even more important is that bisexuality is a somewhat misleading term in this respect; because the implied homoeroticism is totally absent in our context. Although homosexuality was not quite unknown in ancient India, it is hardly conceivable in the figurative language of a bhakti movement; and it is definitely not found in the Vīraśaiva texts. The phenomenon described above is different from bisexuality, by which a man feels inclined to make love with women and men, but always as a man. The point of the vacanakāras, however, is that a śaraṇa is not anymore behaving as a man. He has left manliness behind him; and, in his relation with the godhead, he can only be described in feminine terms. Consequently, his behaviour in everyday life has got feminine aspects. Therefore, androgyny seems to be a much better term with regard to the unusual transformations in the bhakta's life. Although the Vīraśaiva devotee remains biologically a man, he is characterized by feminine features. This kind of androgyny has, unlike bisexuality, a long tradition in Indian culture. Especially in southern Śaivism, we find myths and images of androgyne deities, such as Ardhanārīśvara, a form of Śiva

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[39] A.K. RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 192.

- half male and half female. And if Śiva himself can be an androgyne, why not his devotees?[40]

The following vacana, written by Siddharāma, reveals how the androgyne aspect comes into the life of the devotee, - and disappears again.

Baruva munde puruṣanidde;
banda baḷika strīyāde;
innu mēle napuṃsakanāde.
Namma Kapilasiddhamallikārjunana kūḍabēkendalli
puruṣanāde nōḍavvā, enna hetta tāye.[41]

Before I came, I was a man;
arrived, I became a woman;
hereafter, I became a eunuch.
When I must unite with our *Eminent Lord of the Jasmines,*
look, mother who gave birth to me:
I am a man again.

In the edition of Siddharāma's vacanas, this poem appears rightly under the heading of aikyasthala. This sixth and final stage of mystical development is characterized by the merging of the adept into the godhead. From this end-point, the saint looks back over the course which he has finished. He started as a man; but, when he moved forward, his identity changed: he became a woman. This is certainly an allusion to the special experiences in the śaraṇasthala, the penultimate phase in the ṣaṭsthala system. Siddharāma, too, experienced the relationship with God as a marriage, in which the devotee is the faithful wife. Several vacanas testify to this mystical marriage. For instance: the poem in which Siddharāma tells how he heard the secret that Śiva is fond of women and then 'became a woman too'.[42] But this phase of feminine fulfilment is not the end of the course. The mystic continues his way and even transcends the divine marriage. He leaves the rapture of the śaraṇasthala behind him and enters the quietness of the aikyasthala. In this ultimate phase of godrealization, every duality has disappeared; and, consequently, there is no male nor female anymore. Siddharāma describes such a scarcely comprehensible state with the image of the eunuch. Every passion has faded away and no desire is felt: in the aikyasthala, man is completely lost in the godhead. Siddharāma depicts this final attainment in the same manner as the advaita school: aṅga (soul) and Liṅga become one; and, then, the aṅga is no more: all is merely Liṅga - the aṅga is turned to naught.[43] If one would conclude, however, that his birth as a male child was useless, Siddharāma protests. He points out that his final destination - merging in Lord Kapilasiddhamallikārjuna - is the fulfilment of his life, as a man.

Basava and Siddharāma produced some beautiful examples of androgyne verses. That raises the question of whether this kind of imagery is also found in the poetry of the female Vīraśaiva vacanakāras. Actually, there

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40. About androgyny in indian mythology: Wendy Doniger O'FLAHERTY, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*, Chicago, 1980, pp. 283-334.
41. SIDDHARĀMA, 1265 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 485).
42. SIDDHARĀMA, 1186, see also 1175, 1182, 1185 - 1194.
43. SIDDHARĀMA, 1278, see also 1280, 1281, and especially 1273.

are a few specimens; and it is very interesting to see how this figurative language is used by women mystics. Our first example is a poem by Mahādēviyamma. She was the wife of Mōḷigeya Mārayya who is said to have been the king of Kashmir.

Citrada bombeya hāhe
ellakkū ātmaninda cētanisi naḍeyuttihave?
Avu sūtrādhikana bhēda,
enna śaktijātiya lakṣaṇa.
Nimma bhaktisūtradinda
enna strījāti nimma śrīpādadalli aḍagittu.
Enage bhinnada mātilla.
Ennayyapriya Immaḍi Niḥkaḷaṅkamallikārjunanembuvaru nīve.[44]

Do the bright-coloured puppets move to and fro
because they are living beings?
They are subject to the man with the string;
so my life is determined by Śakti.
By your string of devotion
my femaleness is absorbed in your holy foot.
You are *the Most Immaculate Lord of the Jasmines, dear to my master.*

The beautiful simile of the puppet and the puppeteer is popular in South-Indian bhakti tradition. Also in Vīraśaivism, we can find it in the poems of many vacanakāras. The puppet is the image of the human soul, which is dependent on the guidance of God. In the performance of the puppeteer, it seems that the puppets lead their own lives; but nothing is less true. The artist creates the illusion by which inanimate dolls seem to be living beings. Mahādēviyamma uses this simile in a remarkable way. The puppets are depicted as dependent on the man with the string: and so her life is governed by Śakti, the power of Śiva. So far, it is rather usual; but, then, she changes into the second person and addresses the godhead: 'your string of devotion'. In this way, we are told how her life has become connected with divine powers. It is devotion, bhakti, which opens up human life for the working of Śiva's power. And the result of that Śakti, normally depicted as a female deity, is that her femaleness disappears in the communion with the godhead. Reaching the holy foot of Śiva implies for Mahādēviyamma to be liberated from her female birth. It is clear that the androgyne mystical experience gets a new aspect in the view of this woman. For Mahādēviyamma, it is attractive to get rid of the female stigma which proves the bad karma of her former life. Even her career as a queen of Kashmir apparently did not reconcile her to this fate. The 'string of devotion', however, enables her to live in a new perspective, liberated from the burden of femaleness. The androgyne experiences of Vīraśaiva mysticism provide her with a language in which she surpasses traditional gender distinctions.

We find this theme of 'losing femaleness' also in the vacanas of the greatest Vīraśaiva woman saint, Akka Mahādēvi. Generally, her vacanas reveal an inclination towards drastic and extreme formulations. That is also the case with regard to this theme. We can discern it very clearly in the following ode to Basava: in many respects a quite remarkable text.

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[44] MAHĀDĒVIYAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 2 (this vacana occurs also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XIII:34).

Kāmāriya gelidenu,
Basavā nimma dayadinda.
Sōmadharana hiḍitappenu,
Basavā nimma kṛpeyinda.
Nāmadalli heṅgūsemba hesarādaḍēnu?
Bhāvisalu gaṇḍu rūpa,
Basavā nimma dayadinda.
Atikāmi Cannamallikārjunaṅge toḍarikke
eraḍuvaṟiyade kūḍidenu,
Basavā nimma kṛpeyinda.[45]

By your grace, Basava,
I defeated Love's Adversary.
By your favour, Basava,
I captured the Master of the Moon.
What if, in name, I am called a woman?
By your grace, Basava,
my image has become male.
By your favour, Basava,
I chained the over-lustful *Lovely Lord of the Jasmines*
and transcending duality,
I became one with him.[46]

'Love's Adversary' (Kāmāri) and 'the Master of the Moon' (Sōmadhara) are traditional epithets of Śiva. Akka describes thus in the poem her fight with the godhead in order to gain his attention. Proudly she declares that she has won the battle with her formidable adversary: she has defeated him, made him a captive and shackled him. She owes this impressive victory to the inspiration of the Vīraśaiva ideas, or more precisely to Basava. And what is the effect of such a victory? This is stated in the centre of the poem: her femaleness, here also interpreted as subordination, has lost its meaning. By her brave achievement, she has obtained a male image. The term used here (gaṇḍa-rūpa) is translated in different ways. Seshagiri Rao has: 'In my mind I am a man' and Menezes and Angadi even paraphrase: 'I am, in thought and will, the Masculine Principle'.[47] The main emphasis of the poem, however, is not on the thinking or willing of the saint, but on how other people judge her. The point is not that her deliberations and motivations are manly; but that she is equal to men in the eyes of the Vīraśaiva community (or even in the perception of the whole society). This leads to a convinced negation of her femininity which would not make her popular in modern feminist circles. In medieval India, however, where womanhood was identical with weakness and subordination, such a negation is quite understandable.

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45. AKKA, 299 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 144; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 37; MAHESH, p. 111).

46. This translation is based on the above quoted text of Hirēmaṭha's critical edition. Other translations made use of the old text edition of L. Basavarāju which shows many variations. For our subject, the differences are not important.

47. The latter translation is followed by Mahesh with: 'Je suis, en pensée et en volonté, la virilité'.

For Akka too, the androgyne mysticism of Vīraśaivism provided the material for a new self-awareness. Militant devotees, such as she was, could leave their female position behind and present themselves as equal to men. On the other hand, male chauvinism was criticized with the argument that, for God, all people are his subjects and, therefore, in a female position. Akka expressed these ideas in several of her vacanas.

> .....
> Gaṇḍagaṇḍarellara heṇḍirāgi āḷuva
> garuvana kaṇḍe nānu. .....[48]

.....
I saw the Nobleman
who rules over all men as if they were his wives. .....

> .....
> Enna dēva Cannamallikārjunanemba garuvaṅge
> jagavella heṇṇu nōḍā, ayyā.[49]

.....
For my Nobleman, the god called *Lovely Lord of the Jasmines*,
the whole world is female, you see.

In all the texts, this becomes clear: the traditional subordination of women was severely criticized by Vīraśaiva men and women alike. Mystic experience taught them that the differences between men and women were not that absolute. Therefore, it is not surprising that many women found their place in the Vīraśaiva movement of the twelfth century. We have already become acquainted with some of their poetic texts. Now, we shall discuss the lives of some female devotees in order to obtain a better insight into the position of women in twelfth century Vīraśaivism.

Female Devotees in the Twelfth Century - Akka Mahādēvi

The most famous female śaraṇa of the twelfth century was Akka Mahādēvi. Her life story and the legends around it are told in several classical Kannaḍa works and retold in a number of modern publications.[50] It is, however, rather difficult to discriminate between facts and pious phantasy in the well-known stories about the saint. Of course, the facts have a primary importance; but also the legendary aspects of the stories do tell us something about her and about the impression she made on contemporaries and on later devotees.

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[48] AKKA, 338 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 102; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 41; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 12; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 120; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 15).

[49] AKKA, 282 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 78; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 45).

[50] The modern publications about Akka include: Sarojini SHINTRI, *Akka Mahadevi*, Siigere, 1983; Sarojini SHINTRI, 'A Mystic's Message', *Journal of the Karn. Univ. - Hum.*, Vol. XX, 1976, pp. 61-67; Siddhayya PURANIK, *Mahādēvi*, Dharwar, 1986; H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968, pp. 91-105; H.T. SASNUR, 'Akka Mahadevi', in: *Studies in Education and Culture:* In Honour of Shri D.C. Pavate, Bangalore, 1959, pp. 373-379; David KINSLEY, 'Devotion as an Alternative to Marriage in the Lives of Some Hindu Women Devotees', in: Jayant Lele [ed], *Tradition and Modernity in Bhakti Movements*, Leiden, 1981, pp. 83-93; R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', *JAOS*, Vol. 103, 1983, pp. 361-368; 'Mahādēviyakka - Life Sketch', in: S.S.BHOOSNURMATH, Armando MENEZES [eds], *Śūnyasaṁpādane*, Vol. IV, Dharwar, 1970, pp. 261-267. H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY wrote also a novel on the life of Akka under the title: *Soul unto the Sublime*, Hubli: 1982.

At least one fact is undisputed: Mahādēvi was born in a village named Uḍutaḍi which was the residence of a chieftain (in the legends he even becomes a king) with the name Kauśika. Unfortunately, there are at least three villages which claim to be the old Uḍutaḍi. There is a village of that name near Ballegavi in Shimoga District. Ruins are discovered here which make the villagers believe that their place has an, impressive history as the capital of a kingdom.[51] More than four hundred kilometres northeastwards lies a big village with the name of Mahagaon (Gulbarga District), which claims to be old Uḍutaḍi as well. As long as living memory, a special devotion for Akka Mahādēvi can be found in this place. There is a temple with her idol; and local legend says that it was founded after Akka herself had appeared to one of the villagers. In the village, there is also an old structure which is said to have been king Kauśika's royal palace.[52] The fact that Mahagaon is not far from Kalyāṇa is certainly in favour of its claims. Finally, there is a place called Udatadi (near Shiralkoppa, Shimoga District) which makes the same claims and shows visitors the school that Mahādēvi attended.[53]

According to the biographers, Mahādēvi was born into a pious family. That is most probable; because, in her early youth, she decided to devote her life to the god Mallikārjuna, a form of Śiva. He might have been the image in which God was worshipped at the local temple. The chieftain of Uḍutaḍi was greatly impressed by the beauty of young Mahādēvi and wanted to marry her. But the girl regarded herself as the bride of the lovely (canna) god Mallikārjuna and resisted marriage to anyone: especially this match; because Kauśika was a Jaina. Only after severe pressure, she reconciled herself to the situation. It is told that she consented to a marriage under the express condition that the chieftain too should accept the Śaiva faith. The marriage was doomed to failure; because the young bride felt much stronger bonds with her divine lover than with her husband. Several vacanas testify to this inner conflict, for instance:

> Oḷagaṇa gaṇḍanayyā, horagaṇa miṇḍanayyā,
> eraḍanū naḍesalu bāradayyā.

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51. PURANIK, *Mahādēvi*, p. 2.
52. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Part VI, No. 28: Mahagaon Village, p. 6: 'In this connection a poet Tadkal Shri Gurulingasiddha born in 1823 has in his treatise 'Sharana Basaveshwara Purana' referred to this subject upholding the popular belief that Udutadi and Mahagaon are one and the same village. There is a temple of Akkamahadevi in the village and there is a legend concerning the establishment of this institution. It is said that years back a resident of the village saw a cow grazing in the field of crops close to the site of the present temple. He followed it to drive it away and ultimately caught hold of the cow's tail. The cow with this person started going underground through a big hole formed in the surface. Deep below, Akkamahadevi gave him *Darshan* with her divine presence and blessed him. She also bade him not to disclose this fact to any one else and that should he disobey her instructions, he would die of vomitting blood. When he returned to his village, with great difficulty he sat tongue tied for three days but on the fourth day he could not resist any further the temptation to disclose all the happenings to his friends. When he divulged the facts, he died and at the very place where Akkamahadevi was said to have given *Darshan*, the present temple is erected.'
53. PURANIK, *Mahādēvi*, p. 2.

Laukikaparamārthavemberaḍanū naḍesalu bāradayyā.
Cannamallikārjunayyā,
bilva beḷavalakāyi ondāgi hiḍiyalu bāradayyā.[54]

Inside my husband, outside my lover,
I cannot handle them both!
Everyday life and supreme quest,
I cannot handle both!
O Lovely Lord of the Jasmines,
a pear and an apple
cannot be held in one hand.

After some time, Mahādēvi left her marital home and took refuge with the community of devotees who had settled at Kalyāṇa. According to the legends, her departure from Uḍutaḍi caused utter commotion. She is said to have felt great disgust at the advances of her husband, who was only attracted by her beauty and did not have any sympathy for her spiritual exaltation. The story tells that, on one occasion, she furiously accused him of lustfulness, threw off all her clothes before his eyes, and left the palace naked.

By Indian standards, her conduct was very offensive, because of her nakedness, but even more because she left her legal husband. Marital infidelity was, as we have seen, a cardinal sin for a woman and caused strong repudiation in society. This is the reason for later hagiographers to deny that the marriage between 'king' Kauśika and Mahādēvi actually took place. They relate that the bride left the place after realizing that the king did not intend to fulfil his promise of conversion. The earliest authors, however, state that the marriage did take place; the main witness among them is Harihara who was almost a contemporary.[55]

The tradition that Mahādēvi walked naked to Kalyāṇa seems to be very credible; because some of her own vacanas support it. The best example is the following poem.

Kaisiriya daṇḍava koḷabahudallade,
maisiriya daṇḍava koḷaluṇṭe?
Uṭṭantaha uḍige toḍigeyanella seḷedukoḷabahudallade
muccirda musukirda nirvāṇava seḷedukoḷabahude?
Cannamallikārjunadēvara beḷaganuṭṭu lajjegeṭṭavaḷige
uḍuge toḍugeya haṅgēkō maruḷe?[56]

You can confiscate the riches in the hand,
but can you confiscate the riches of the body?
You can rip off all clothing and ornaments from the body,
but can you rip off the bliss that covers and veils me?
O fool, what is the need of clothing and ornaments
for the shameless woman
who is clad in the light of the divine *Lovely Lord of the Jasmines*?

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[54] AKKA, 159 (cf. MAHESH, p. 134; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 127; the other translators omit this vacana, probably because of its immoral associations!).

[55] SHINTRI, *Akka Mahadevi*, pp. 4-5 gives a good review of the sources.

[56] AKKA, 301 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 77; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 50; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 14; MAHESH, p. 136; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 129; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 25).

So Mahādēvi threw away her clothing, having cast off all sense of shame, and covered her body only with her long hair. Acting thus, she followed a particular ascetic tradition. A vow of nudity was not quite unknown in Hinduism; but, especially in Jainism, it became a very important phenomenon. It was the distinguishing feature of the followers of one of its monastic schools, the digambaras (air-dressed), who held a dominant position in medieval Karnataka.[57] Therefore, Mahādēvi's action will not have been completely inexplicable, at least not to her Jaina husband. But it was most unusual for a woman to choose this way of world-renouncement. The digambaras even denied the possibility that women be liberated because they could not practise nudity. Several vacanas witness to the commotion caused by Mahādēvi's behaviour.[58] Ascetism was considered to be a male affair and the choice for renunciatory life (sannyāsa) was denied to women. Mahādēvi expected to find understanding and hospitality in Kalyāṇa where the Vīraśaiva revolution had given so many possibilities to women devotees. But there is strong evidence that, even there, people were upset about this female claim on a male ascetic tradition. The whole sixteenth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane is devoted to an extensive dialogue between Allama and Mahādēvi in which the former proves to be a strict interrogator. The naked woman saint has to produce convincing evidence that she is not a fraud or a lunatic, but a real devotee and a bride of God. Only after long hesitation, the Vīraśaiva community accepted her and honoured her with the title Akka (elder sister). The story of this severe test reflects certainly the difficulties of later generations with the unconventional female saint; but it is almost impossible that the composers of the Śūnyasampādane would have invented the whole episode. The vacanas of Akka, Allama and Basava which are used in that chapter, can only relate to a historical controversy between the female sannyāsini and the Vīraśaiva leaders. The prominent position of Allama is in this case not necessarily due to the evident preference of the vacana compilers. It is likely that Allama, being an exponent of the classical sannyāsa tradition, had the greatest difficulties to accept a woman in this role.

Akka Mahādēvi spent some time in the midst of the devotees at Kalyāṇa; and it was a fruitful time for her spiritual development. In her vacanas, she regularly expresses her gratitude towards Basava, Allama and Cannabasava for their teachings and their examplary spirituality. But, finally, she chose her own way and left Kalyāṇa. Akka was too much of a solitary seeker to find satisfaction in such a large and turbulent community. She went on foot to the holy mountain of Śrīśaila, an old Śaiva centre of pilgrimage with a famous monastery. There, she expected to find her divine lover and to realize the consubstantial union with him. The heavenly plantain-grove of Śrīśaila is said to have been the end-point of her quest. According to the legends, she died there in her early twenties in complete surrender to her Lord.

Among the Vīraśaiva saints, Akka Mahādēvi is a unique personality.

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57. See: Ram Bhushan Prasad SINGH, *Jainism in Early Medieval Karnataka*, Delhi, 1975.
58. AKKA 33, 88, 112, 150.

She embodies the classical tradition of world-renouncement, which was very remarkable for a woman in those days. Vīraśaivism was attractive to her because it gave her as a woman a chance to follow a spiritual path which was so far restricted to men. There is no doubt that she valued the greatness of Basava and his fellow śaraṇas. Her life was, like theirs, dominated by devotion: in particular that special type of devotion in which God is experienced as a loving husband (satipatibhakti). Nevertheless, Akka was not completely on one line with the devotees of Kalyāṇa. Life within the world and social ideals did not mean anything to her. She was convinced that she could reach her Lord only outside human society; and, therefore, she had to break away from the Kalyāṇa community after some time in order to continue her way upwards.

There are not many women saints in Indian history who reach the level of Akka Mahādēvi. Lalded, the fourteenth century poet-saint of Kashmir, and Mīrābāī, the devotional poetess of sixteenth century Rajasthan, can be compared with her.[59] Both experienced the relationship with God as a love affair; and, for both, this love relationship was an alternative to marriage. Overwhelming passion for a divine lover made them move away from their legal husbands and lead a most unconventional life. Poetry was a way of release for them; and in passionate verses, they expressed the deep emotions of heavenly love. The first traces of this poetical devotion by women can already be found before the tenth century when the Tamil poetess Āṇṭāḷ composed her love songs to Lord Kṛṣṇa.[60] Obviously, Akka stands in this tradition of bridal mysticism. Her vacanas reveal the same passion for the heavenly consort, as well as utter rejection of bodily attraction and conventional eroticism. The latter aspect is shown in the next vacana.

Amēdhyada maḍike, mūtrada kuḍike,
eluvina taḍike, kīvina haḍike -
suḍalī dēhava, oḍaluviḍidu keḍadiru,
Cannamallikārjunanar̤iyada maruḷe.[61]

A pot of shit, a can of piss,
a frame of bones, the stench of pus -
this body, burn it! Do not get ruined
by preserving the body,
you fool who does not know
the Lovely Lord of the Jasmines!

According to legendary tradition, these words were uttered by Akka at the climax of the quarrel with her husband Kauśika. He was the one who ruined his life by his carnal desire and his lack of spiritual knowledge. But the poem has also more general significance; because it expresses explicitly the rejection of physical values that is typical of Akka's mysticism. Particularly in this respect, Akka differs from Basava and the mainstream of Vīraśaivism.

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[59] See KINSLEY, 'Devotion as an Alternative to Marriage in the Lives of Some Hindu Women Devotees'.

[60] See Shankar Gopal TULPULE, *Mysticism in Medieval India*, Wiesbaden, 1984, pp. 30-37, 249-250.

[61] AKKA, 33 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 124; SESHAGIRI RAO, p. 21; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 15. These translations are based on a slightly different text).

Nevertheless, Akka Mahādēvi is one of the most important mystics of the Vīraśaiva tradition. She proved that women could attain the highest peaks of spiritual experience; and her vacanas belong definitely to the cream of devotional poetry. It was characteristic of Vīraśaivism that there was place for this very unconventional woman, albeit not without hesitation.

Female Devotees in the Twelfth Century - Muktāyakka

There is also another Vīraśaiva devotee who was distinguished by the title 'Akka'. Muktāyakka was, like Akka Mahādēvi, a female devotee with a strong inclination towards ascetism. She never became as famous as the other Akka; but her life story is quite interesting and she represents a special type of Vīraśaiva spirituality. The main source for her biography is the Śūnyasaṃpādane of which the second chapter is devoted to her encounter with Allama Prabhu. There are a few modern articles on Muktāyakka.[62]

Muktāyi was born in a small village named Lakkuṇḍi in present Bijapur District. She was the younger sister of an experienced ascetic called Ajagaṇṇa. He was to play a dominant role in the life of his sister. Muktāyi owed not only worldly knowledge and support to her brother, he was also her spiritual teacher. So it is not surprising that her vacanas bear his name as devotional signature.

It is very difficult to isolate the biographical data of Muktāyakka and her brother from the fanciful legendary stories; but some events can be reasonably confirmed. One crucial point in the stories is that Ajagaṇṇa took a vow of perpetual silence. There are several allusions to his dumbness in the vacanas of his sister; and it plays a significant role in her philosophical views. There is, however, less reason to believe the fantastic accretions that legendary tradition has also attributed to this vow: he is said to have worn an iṣṭaliṅga half-way in his throat and his penance would have been to utter constantly a sacred spell in silence. After some years, Ajagaṇṇa broke his vow and died on the spot. All stories agree that it was an accident: carrying a load into his house he bumped his forehead against the doorpost and automatically pronounced the holy spell out loud.

Muktāyi was stricken by grief at the sudden and needless death of her brother. We do not know whether she lived with her brother. According to some hagiographers, she was married and was informed of her brother's fate by means of telepathy. Anyhow, her husband did not play a role in the important events after Ajagaṇṇa's death. Muktāyi left her home in utter despair and wandered through the forests. An encounter with Vīraśaiva saints showed her a way out of her desperation and changed her life completely. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane, it is, of course,

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[62] C.R. YARAVINTELIMATH, 'Muktayakka', *Journal of the Karn. Univ. - Hum.*, Vol. XX, 1976, pp. 68-76; 'Muktāyakka (Life-Sketch)', in: S.C. NANDIMATH, L.M.A. MENEZES, R.C. HIREMATH [eds], *Śūnyasaṁpāḍane*, Vol. I, Dharwar, 1965, pp. 127-136; R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', *JAOS*, Vol. 103, 1983, pp. 361-368. (The latter author misspells her name as Muktāyyakka!)

Allama Prabhu who brought about this salutary revolution. The second chapter of the Śūnyasaṃpādane contains the philosophical dialogue between Allama and Muktāyi. Allama teaches her how true illumination makes death acceptable and enables the devotee to live without a spiritual teacher.

The most striking aspect of this dialogue is the independent attitude of the wandering woman. In her view, her life was ruined by the unexpected and tragic death of her beloved brother; but she is not inclined to accept without question the solace and explanation of a new teacher. This self-assured attitude is so unusual in Hindu culture that later generations could not always understand and value Muktayakka's behaviour. Modern authors tend to stress the helplessness of the grief-stricken woman who seems unable to live without her brother. The following evaluation is typical: '...we need not blame Muktāyi too severely, since sisterly affection is a normal human weakness [....]. She deserves more our pity than our censure.'[63] However, even the Śūnyasaṃpādane does not depict Muktāyi as a weak and pitiful woman, but only as one who is compelled by the circumstances to find a new way of life. The original vacanas which are included in the Śūnyasaṃpādane reveal, on the contrary, a strong and accomplished woman philosopher.

Muktāyi has learned from her silent brother that speech and words are less important than inner experience; and this makes her look with distrust on the eloquent Allama.

Naḍedu naḍedu kaḍeya kaṇḍavaru
nuḍidu nuḍidu hēḷuttihare?
Nuḍidu nuḍidu hēḷuvannakkara
naḍedudellā husiyembenu.
Mātina mathanadindāda aṛivu
karaṇamathanadindādudallade,
anupama svarabhēdavāda pari entu hēḷā?
Idira gelabēkendu nuḍidukoṇḍaḍēnu,
manakke manave sākṣiyāgi niḥpatiyalla nōḍā.
Enna Ajagaṇṇatande śabudakke hēsi mugudanādanu.[64]
Those who have walked and walked and seen the goal,
are they telling about it, speaking and speaking?
Those who are still telling, speaking and speaking,
their progress is a lie, I tell you.
The knowledge that comes from the stirring of words,
which comes from the stirring of the senses, -
tell me: how could a sound be so totally different?
Or do you just speak to score a point?
Look, this attesting of the mind to itself is no achievement.
My father Ajagaṇṇa has become silent,
because he felt an aversion to words.

Muktāyakka is not in the least impressed by sermons and admonitions;

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[63] The editors of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*, Vol. I, p. 129.
[64] MUKTĀYAKKA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 110 (cf. *Śūnyasaṃpādane* II:29).

and, especially, she distrusts people who are boasting of their spiritual achievements. It is most remarkable that, in the Śūnyasampādane, a woman ascetic directs this criticism at Allama who is given an unassailable position in the book. The tradition about the independent wandering woman must have been so strong that it could neither be ignored nor adjusted. And that means that the essence of the Muktāyakka story brings us back to the revolutionary circumstances of the twelfth century.

Such is not the case with the line of reasoning of both saints as it is found in the Śūnyasampādane. The compiler has used some vacanas that do not fit properly into the framework of the dialogue. Therefore, it can be assumed that it is mainly his own construction in which the old poems had to find a place. Consequently, the course of the dialogue does not add much to our knowledge of the twelfth century woman saint. But the poems of Muktāyakka, which are certainly original, can tell us something about her ideas and spirituality.

A central concept in Muktāyakka's philosophy is the guru, the spiritual teacher. A devotee needs the help of the guru to acquire true knowledge of the liṅga, the jaṅgama and the gift of grace, prasāda. Essentially, the task of the guru is to supply the devotee with self-knowledge.

.....
Guruvacanadindallade tanna tānaṛ̤iyabāradu. .....[65]

.....
Without the guru's word you cannot know yourself. .....

From this text, it becomes clear that devotees have to find their own way. Uncritical following of the guru is useless; and, certainly, Muktāyakka will not propagate such giving up of one's own responsibility. In a few vacanas, it seems that, finally, her own experience is more important than the spiritual teacher:

Tanna tānaṛ̤idavaṅge aṛ̤ive guru. .....[66]
Knowledge itself is the teacher for a person with self-knowledge.
.....

The point is that the guru does not transmit knowledge from outside to his pupil; but he makes the pupil aware of that knowledge which is hidden in every human being. In principle, one could do without a guru; because one has the knowledge already in one's own soul. People are, however, not able to acquire that knowledge on their own; and, therefore, it is useful to look for a suitable teacher. Even the vacana quoted above ends with the conclusion:

.....
Guru tānādaḍū guruviḍidirabēku, enna Ajagaṇṇanante.[67]

.....
Being oneself the teacher,
still one has to follow a teacher
like *my Ajagaṇṇa.*

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65. MUKTĀYAKKA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 113 (cf. *Śūnyasampādane* II:23).
66. MUKTĀYAKKA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 112 (cf. *Śūnyasampādane* II:25).
67. MUKTĀYAKKA, idem.

Another important aspect of Muktāyakka's philosophy is the process of transcending duality. Phenomena of every kind are not existing in reality; but, because of the force of illusion, they seem to be realities. For the adept, it is possible to transcend all human discriminations and dualities and to experience the unity of all being (advaita); that is the ultimate goal of the spiritual quest. The realization of this idea of advaita was the purpose of many Śaiva ascetics in South India; but it is rather exceptional that a woman chose this aim in life. Muktāyakka does not express the slightest doubt about whether she can achieve that highest unity. Her brother Ajagaṇṇa attained the supreme experience; so it must be possible for her to reach the same goal. Ajagaṇṇa finally transcended all duality and did not need any longer to utter words; and, in the same way, she shall be silent in the end:

Ghanamahimaśaraṇara saṅgadinda
ghanakke ghanavēdyavāda baḷika
ar̤iyalilla, mar̤eyalilla,
kūḍalilla, agalalilla.
Mana mēredappi niravayalāda sukhava
śūnya niśśūnyavendu nuḍiyaluṇṭe?
Śabdamugdhavāgi enna Ajagaṇṇatandeya berasida baḷika,
uriyuṇḍa karpuradantādenayyā.[68]

After one has attained the Absolute
through contact with the saints of the Glory,
there is no knowing nor forgetting,
there is no joining nor separating.
Having transcended the limits of the mind,
can you call the joy of the Infinite
either 'Void' or 'Non-Void'?
After I have been united with *my father Ajagaṇṇa*
I have become silent,
resembling camphor consumed by fire.

With a classical simile, Muktāyakka expresses her attainment of the Absolute: like the piece of camphor which is lit by the worshipper, her life is set ablaze by devotion. And just as the piece of camphor is not recognizable anymore as camphor but has become fire, thus her life ends in total union with the Infinite. She proved that women and men alike can go along this way of enlightenment. With her highly sophisticated philosophy, she has demonstrated that women could make an essential contribution to the Vīraśaiva movement of the twelfth century.

Female Devotees in the Twelfth Century - Married Women

Although both Akkas played an important role in the Vīraśaiva movement, they are not the most surprising examples of female contribution. Mahādēviyakka and Muktāyakka followed a classical path of world-renunciation. Actually, it was unusual for women to do so; but this way of spiritual life as such was not new. A remarkable new phenomenon, however, was the participation of many married women in the spiritual revival. They led a normal family life; but, nevertheless, they followed the mystical path of the six stages and tried to attain the highest realization of the divine. This combination was highly uncommon in Hindu tradition: it forms a special feature of twelfth-century Vīraśaivism.

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[68] MUKTĀYAKKA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 131 (cf. *Śūnyasampādane* II:41).

We do not know the number of these 'housewives-saints' as they are normally called in India. But from the historical and legendary material, it becomes clear that they played a vital role in the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa. Vacanas of at least twenty married women from the twelfth century have been preserved.[69] The female devotees seem to have participated fully in the discourses in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' (Anubhava Maṇṭapa) at Kalyāṇa where the Vīraśaiva mystics exchanged their views and ideas. The records of the philosophical discussions, as composed in the Śūnyasaṃpādane, reveal a considerable contribution on the part of married women.

The fact that the charismatic leader of the movement, Basava, led a family life himself certainly strengthened the position of the married women within the community. Both wives of Basava played an active part in devotional and philosophical pursuits. Especially his favourite wife Nīlamma wrote many impressing vacanas as well as prose literature and songs. Not much is known about her life; but her vacanas reveal something of her personality and her mysticism.

Nīlamma (or: Nīlāmbā, Nīlalōcane, Nīladēvi, Māyidēvi) was a daughter of the minister Siddaṇṇa and his wife Padmagandhi.[70] Her father was probably a brother of Baladēva, the father of Basava's first wife Gaṅgāmbike. In one of the classical biographies of Basava (Mahābasavarājacaritra by Siṅgirāja, about 1500 A.D.) it is told that Nīlamma was brought up together with a brother of the later king Bijjala, after his mother immolated herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. So Nīlamma was treated as a sister by the king; and, according to this story, it was the king who arranged her marriage to Basava in order to place the influential treasurer in his debt. Not everybody is convinced of the historical value of this tradition,[71] but it gives a plausible explanation for the remarkable fact that Nīlamma stayed at Kalyāṇa after all devotees, including Basava, had fled from the king's repression.

In her vacanas, Nīlamma displays an independent attitude and a strong self-confidence. Her strong resistance to female subordination has already been noted.[72] That is a typical element of her poems. She denies her womanhood in order to get rid of all negative associations of female existence. Whatever she might be: she was not a shy woman who resigned herself to her fate.

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[69] Edited by R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA: *Nīlammana vacanagaḷu mattu Liṅgammana vacanagaḷu*, and: *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*. The latter is a collection of vacanas of twenty-seven authors; it is, however, not clear whether all of them were married, and two married women probably belong to a later date (Guḍḍavve and Masaṇamma). Cf. S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 109-117, who mentions also a second Ṛemmavve, and Siddayya PURANIK, 'Glorious Daughters of a Great Revolution', in: *Basava Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 3/4, 1989, pp. 79-82, who also mentions Amuge Rāyamma and a second Akkamma.

[70] About Nīlamma: P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and his Times*, Dharwar, 1968, pp. 243, 263-4; NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, p. 110; G.R. GARG, *International Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1987, p. 111; R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', *JAOS*, Vol. 103, 1983, pp. 366-7.

[71] DESAI, *Basavēśvara and his Times*, p. 264, rejects Siṅgirāja's story, but he gives very little evidence, if any, for his negative conclusion.

Āḍalillavayyā nānu heṇṇu rūpa dharisi;
nuḍiyalillavayyā nānu heṇṇu rūpa dharisi,
nānu heṇṇallada kāraṇa,
nānu irapara nāstiyādavaḷayyā.
Nānu ubhayada saṅgava kaṇḍu kāṇadantiddenayyā Saṅgayyā,
Basava bayala kaṇḍa kāraṇa.[73]

Let it not go round that I have a female form,
let it not be said that I have a female form,
for I am not a woman,
my low being has ceased.
O Lord of Confluence,
I did not see anymore
since I saw the union of both,
because I saw Basava and the Void.

She does not want to be treated as a woman; because she has transcended the distinctions of worldly existence. Through mystical practice, she realized that state of awareness in which individual existence does not play a role anymore. She gives all credit for this achievement to her husband-guru, whose attaining of the Void (Bayalu = Śūnya) has opened her eyes. And, after seeing this final goal of the mystic path, nothing on earth is still worth seeing. So the vacana states that the ultimate experience is the union (saṅga); and that experience of saṅga is brought before the Lord of Confluence (Saṅgayya).

The poem gives a good impression of Nīlamma's mysticism and her spiritual relationship with Basava. She regards her husband as her personal guru; and she gives great honour to him for his example of God-realization. That is the reason that many of her vacanas contain real eulogies to Basava. Her own progress on the spiritual path, however, is quite impressive as well. Her vacanas reveal her deep insight into the higher levels of spiritual consciousness. Some of them even refer to the attainment of the supreme union with the Void. The following vacana is a good example; because it expresses a rare mystical achievement.

Nirmūlavāyittāhā! Nirālambavāyittāhā! Nirākuḷavāyittāhā!
Puṇyada phala tōr̤i bayalane kūḍittu.
Ā bayalu nirvayalāyittu.
Ā nirvayalanuḍugi nijasukhiyādenayyā nānu.
Saṅgayyanalli niśśūnyavāyittayyā![74]

Oh, it is rootless! Oh, it is unique! Oh, it is brilliant!
The fruit of merit has appeared and joined the Void.
That Void has become Super Void.
And wiping away that Super Void,

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[72] See pages 160-161.
[73] NĪLAMMA, 83.
[74] NĪLAMMA, 101 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XXI:58).

I experience the eternal bliss.
In the Lord of the Confluence
it has become the Supreme Void!

Nīlamma describes an experience which is hard to grasp in words. Only by negations can she give an account of what she discovered during her spiritual progress. The experience, which she wants to communicate, is without root, without support, and without confusion. So it does not fit in normal mundane experiences which are always characterized by its causes, involvements and tensions. At least, it is clear that Nīlamma's supermundane experience is something totally unique. Of course, a description of such an experience cannot be adequate: it is speaking of the unspeakable. The poetess tries to approach in words that final goal of mystical attainment which Vīraśaivas usually call 'the Void' (Bayalu). This divine superconsciousness cannot be defined by human concepts; and, therefore, the only appropriate term is 'nothing' or 'void'. But, in this void, Nīlamma finds the fruit of her previous and present lives, her karma. And in that experience, the Void does not remain the same; but it changes into a higher perfection. This state cannot be described otherwise than in negative terms: and so the Void becomes a non-Void or Super Void. And, even this is not yet the end of the mystical path; because Nīlamma reaches out to a reality behind the Super Void; and, finally, she finds there the most perfect bliss. In this union with the Lord of Union, she experiences the supreme reality which can only be described as the Void of Voids or the Supreme Void. Nīlamma has apparently achieved a unique mystical level.

In the vacana quoted above, the poetess used philosophical terms in order to express the results of her devotion and penance. There is, however, also another language to describe what is beyond description. That is the enigmatic language of allegorical poetry (beḍagina vacana). Only a few vacanakāras were well-versed in this extremely difficult esoteric system of similes. Basava wrote allegorical poems, but they are few in number. Allama was the undisputed master in this art of riddle verses. But Nīlamma, too, has written some poems of this type. One of those poems in particular is very interesting: not only because of its content but also because of the remarkable story which is attached to it.

Ippeya hūvananugoḷisalu ippe hippeyāyittu.
Sarpana śira kaṇṭhadalli mūgutiya saragoḷisidenayyā.
Nāvalliddaḍēnu, nāvilliddaḍēnu?
Namma namma saṃsargadalli nirupamākāramūrtigaḷāgi
niravayavanaidi nijasukhigaḷādevu.
Basavanalli emage teṟapillavayyā, Appaṇṇā.
Bhāvaśūnyaḷu nānu Saṅgayyā![75]

While preparing the ippe-flower,
the flower became pulp.
I have bridled the snake
with a nose-ring round his head and neck.
What if we are there, what if we are here?

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75. NĪLAMMA, 39 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XXI:40).

Through our mutual solidarity
we have become unequalled persons
and having reached the Infinite
we experienced eternal bliss.
Between Basava and me
there is no gap, O Appaṇṇa.
O Lord of the Confluence,
I am totally Void.

The first line is a word-play with the word 'ippe', the name of a certain tree.[76] The flowers of this tree were used to prepare a kind of liquor. In the course of this process, nothing remains of the form of the flowers: they become just pulp, 'hippe'. This provides the simile which the poetess uses to describe the process of God-realization in which normal human existence ceases to be. But it is not just a metaphor; because the word 'ippe' has yet a second meaning: it is also a form of the verb 'iru', 'to be', namely the second person singular of the present tense: 'you are'. Thus, the message is given in a double way: your being will fade away while reaching the Absolute, as the flowers lose their form when they reach their destination. In the second line, we come across a more usual image. The snake that must be bridled stands for the human senses. The poetess declares that she was able to bring these poisonous senses under control so that they will not hurt her anymore. But this accomplishment is not solely her personal merit. She gives credit to Basava for the achievement of this final stage of mysticism; because their union made it possible to reach the stage that surpasses all forms and figures (nirupamākāramūrtigaḷu). And here, in the realm of the Infinite, the distinctions between people are removed: and so she and Basava are united in divine bliss. Therefore, it has become unimportant where they are on earth and whether they meet each other or not.

According to tradition, as told in the Śūnyasampādane, Nīlamma uttered those words on a special occasion. The story relates that Basava took refuge at the place of his enlightenment, Kūḍalasaṅgama, when the persecution of the Vīraśaivas under king Bijjaḷa started. But Nīlamma stayed at Kalyāṇa. Basava sent Appaṇṇa as a messenger to Kalyāṇa in order to ask Nīlamma to join her husband at his safe and sacred residence. She, however, refused to leave the town with the argument that physical community is unnecessary if there is continuously spiritual community. Of course, it cannot be proved that the vacana quoted above was originally connected with this event. But the tradition of Nīlamma's refusal to join her husband can hardly be a later invention; because such an independent choice can only be imagined in the revolutionary setting of the twelfth century. And the vacana expresses clearly the motivation which brought this remarkable woman saint to her choice.

Nīlamma occupied a prominent position under the married women devotees of Kalyāṇa; but there were others in a similar position. Gaṅgāmbike, Basava's first wife, was also rather influential, and likewise Akkanāgamma, Basava's sister and the mother of Cannabasava, played a major role. Outside the circle of Basava's relatives, we find the prominent figure of Mahādēviyamma.[77]

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[76] The Bassia latifolia Roxb.

This mother Mahādēvi' was the wife of Mōḷigeya Mārayya, who had been the king of Kashmir, according to the legends. Mārayya settled with his wife in Kalyāṇa where he made a living by the simple labour of wood cutting. His royal origin, however, was certainly not forgotten; and, thus, his wife is often called Rāṇi (queen) Mahādēvi. In the community of the devotees, this lady made substantial contributions to the discussions. Her vacanas, of which sixty-nine have been preserved, reveal that she instructed male devotees, including her husband, in right behaviour and knowledge of the divine. This was a very unusual task for a woman; and she had to persuade the unwilling men to accept her teaching. In particular her own husband had to be convinced of the importance of her words. So she addressed Mārayya after reminding him of the intimacy of their marriage thus:

> .....
> Śaktiya mātendu dhikkarisabēḍa! .....[78]

> .....
> Do not despise a woman's word! .....

In utter modestness, Mahādēviyamma tried to win the men over to her insights and ideas. Her choice for this modest approach reveals the difficulties of her position: only with flattering and self-effacing speech, she was able to break through the male chauvinism which, apparently, had not disappeared in the Vīraśaiva community. Nīlamma tried to gain an independent position; but she had always acknowledged Basava as her guru and honoured him accordingly. Mahādēviyamma, however, considered her mission in life to be, to some extent, the guru of her husband; and she does not even hesitate to teach and correct other men as well. Her royal background probably made it somewhat easier for her to occupy such an extraordinary position; but, still, she must proceed with great caution. The message of her sayings is not very revolutionary and, mainly, stresses the importance of disinterested labour and the senselessness of looking for God outside oneself. Although these ideas as such would not give cause for commotion, the woman guru has to bring out her teaching in a prudent way. When she instructs her male audience to seek the divine only in one's own soul, she even says:

> .....
> Kaṇṇili nōḍi kaṇṇa maṟedenendu
> ā bhinnabhāvadante ādirallā!
> Adu nimma suguṇavalla, enna guṇa. .....[79]

> .....
> Seeing with the eyes, you have forgotten your eyes;
> oh, you have come into that dual state of being!

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[77] About Mahādēviyamma: NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, p. 111; GARG, *International Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, Vol. IV, p. 90; MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', p. 365; 'Mōḷigeya Mārayya', in: S.S. BHOOSNURMATH, Armando MENEZES [eds], *Śūnyasaṁpādane*, Vol. IV, Dharwar, 1970, pp. 59-64.

[78] MAHĀDĒVIYAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śiva-śaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 53 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XIII:24).

[79] MAHĀDĒVIYAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śiva-śaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 62 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XIII:25).

But that is not your good nature,
that is my nature. .....

She makes an appeal to the men to act according to their good nature (su-guṇa) which will enable them to find the divine in themselves. Her argument is that it is much easier for them than for her; because she is a woman; and the female nature (guṇa) is characterized by ignorance and illusion. Thus, ignorant men are not real men; they have sunk, rather, to the low level of female consciousness. By such a denial of one's own possibilities, she tries to dispel the suspicions of her male audience. It seems to be more a strategy than a real conviction: in other texts, she liberates herself from the negative associations of womanhood, as we have already seen in another example.[80]

In the Śūnyasampādane, we find the vacanas of Mahādēviyamma in the form of a dialogue with her husband. Not all her poems seem to fit into this framework; but some of them are certainly addressed to her husband. In these poems, she expresses the conviction that husband and wife need each other in all spheres of life, including the spiritual quest. The marital relationship can even be so strong that husband and wife attain a perfect unity in which every distinction has become meaningless. Some of the verses on this theme resemble romantic love poetry, as the following example will show.

Kāliddante tale naḍeduduṇṭe ayyā?
Kaṇṇiddante karṇa nōḍiduduṇṭe ayyā?
Bāyiddante nāsika uṇḍuduṇṭe ayyā?
Tāyillade makkaḷu banda ter̤ana hēḷayyā?
Nimma sēveya tottina bhāvava kēḷalētakke?
Paṭadoḷagaṇa bālasarakke pratisūtra nēṇuṇṭe?
Nimmalliye enna bhāvalēpa
Ennayyapriya Immaḍi Niḥkaḷaṅkamallikārjunanalliye.[81]

Did ever the head walk like the foot?
Did ever the ear see like the eye?
Did ever the nose eat like the mouth?
Tell me, how could children come without a mother?
Why should you inquire about the heart of your servant-maid?
Does the kite's tail need an extra string?
My heart is merged with you
in *the Most Immaculate Lord of the Jasmines, dear to my master.*

In this poem, she wants to express how her existence is essentially united with that of her husband. They have their own function; but they belong together, just as the parts of the body belong together, in spite of their different functions. There is no need to know who she is individually, since their lives are inextricably entwined. Her path is the same as her husband's, as the tail of a kite cannot but follow the kite with which it is connected.

Mahādēviyamma demonstrates, like Nīlamma, how Vīraśaiva women experienced their spiritual development on a par with their husbands.

[80] See page 164.

[81] MAHĀDĒVIYAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śiva-śaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 10 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XIII:33).

Besides, the example of the queen guru shows that, in the Vīraśaiva movement, women could obtain positions which were traditionally reserved for men. Both ladies, however, had the advantage of a privileged status: the former because of her royal origin and the latter as the wife of the undisputed leader.

There were other women as well who made a major contribution to the devotional and social revival of the twelfth century. Especially those from the lower strata of society give proof of the drastic changes which Vīraśaivism brought about. These women are usually called 'kāyakada Śivaśaraṇeyaru' - the women devotees who followed a profession.[82] Although there is no detailed information about these women, the names of some of them reveal the type of labour they performed. For example, 'Kadira Ṛemmavve' indicates a woman with the name Ṛemmavve who earned a living by spinning. Several occupations occur in the names of the working female devotees. There were spinners, like Ṛemmavve, Kāḷavve, and Ammavve, and there was a rope maker among them named Kāmamma. Rēmamma practised the trade of mirror making, Kētaladēvi was a potter, and a certain Kaḷavve worked at a carpenter's yard. We know two rice pounders named Ṛemmavve and Sōmamma, whilst Lakkamma earned a living by gleaning rice and Piṭṭavve sold pancakes. Finally, Satyakka performed the humble labour of sweeping, and Gaṅgamma was a prostitute.

These women from traditionally unlearned circles made their own contribution to the Vīraśaiva movement. Many of them composed vacanas and participated in the spiritual discourses at Kalyāṇa. Unfortunately, not many of their poems have come down to us; but there are some which give a good idea of the experiences of the women of the lower strata. So Ṛemmavve, the spinner, wrote an interesting poem on the mystical union with the divine lover, which is also a proof of social emancipation among the Vīraśaiva women.

Ellara heṇḍiru toḷasikkuvaru;
enna gaṇḍaṅge toḷasuvudilla.
Ellara gaṇḍandirige basivaru;
enna gaṇḍaṅge basivudilla.
Ellara gaṇḍandirige bījavuṇṭu;
enna gaṇḍaṅge aṇḍada bījavilla.
Ellara gaṇḍandiru mēle;
enna gaṇḍa keḷage, nā mēle.
Kadira Ṛemmiyoḍeya Gummēśvarā.[83]
Other women have to wash themselves,
but for my husband washing is not needed.

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[82] Sarojini SHINTRI, 'Women in the Virasaiva Movement', *Basava Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1984, pp. 41-62. See also: NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Viraśaivism*, pp. 109-114; T.S. ŚĀMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, Mysore, 1967; H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968; HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippatteḷu Sivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*.

[83] KADIRA ṚEMMAVVE, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 193. Cf. P.G. HAḶAKAṬṬI [ed], *Vacanaśāstrasāra*, p. 106, who gives this poem (in a slightly different text) with an extensive commentary.

All other men are emitting their seed,
but my husband does not so.
All other men have seed,
but my husband has no seed in his balls.
All other men lie on top,
but my husband is under, I am on top.
O Lord over the devils, my master!

It is not uncommon, as we have seen, to describe the union with God in terms of an erotic relationship. The striking aspect of this vacana, however, is the detailed comparison between human eroticism and mystical experience. By that comparison, R̤emmavve tells us something about the changes in her situation as a result of her conversion to the Vīraśaiva movement. She depicts normal married life in terms of the subordination of women to men. For women, all kinds of purifications are prescribed by men; and they must be at their husbands' disposal with all their physical functions. Their position is quite clear from the classical sexual posture: the man lies on top, and he possesses his wife. Contrary to this subordinate role of women is the description of the relationship with the divine lover. No washing, no purifications are required; and the woman does not have to be available for his sexual enjoyment or the procreation of his sons. She is not dominated; but she is 'on top': she takes the initiative in ritual and meditation. R̤emmavve's image for this new situation is the sexual posture in which the woman sits on the man. In most parts of India, it was regarded as abnormal or even perverse. Only in the southern country of Kerala was this the usual position.[84] It is not unlikely that Kerala was R̤emmavve's homeland, all the more so because her curious devotional signature Gummēśvara fits in well with the folk religion of that country in which devils play an important role. This simple poem gives us some idea of the impact of the Vīraśaiva movement on women who did not enjoy any independence or self-respect so far. R̤emmavve displays true enthusiasm about the new values of Vīraśaiva mysticism which changed her life drastically. Compared to the usual position of women, her life is turned upside down: she has become powerful.

R̤emmavve is not the only woman of low birth who acquired self-confidence and power through the new ethics of Vīraśaivism. Well-known is also the case of Lakkamma, the rice gleaner, with whom we became acquainted in the discussion about labour (kāyaka).[85] The Śūnyasampādane contains the story about this simple woman who came to the śaraṇas' meeting in order to put her husband Mārayya to work. Her argument was that the daily work was held up by all the discourses in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience'. And could there be anything more important than dedicated labour? This action of Lakkamma was very humiliating for her husband; and, therefore, it is not likely that it is an invention of later hagiographers. The next episode of the story originates most probably in the twelfth century as well; because the compilers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane quote no less than ten of Lakkamma's

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84. K.V. Zvelebil, personal communication, 7-9-1990.
85. See pages 120-121. About Lakkamma see also: MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', p. 366; ŚĀMARĀYA, *Śivaśaraṇa kathāratnakōśa*, pp. 30-31.

vacanas to illustrate the same event.[86] It concerns the remarkable answer of Lakkamma, when her husband comes home that day with a double measure of collected rice grains. Instead of showing gratitude that her public reproach incited him to such a zest for work, she abuses him because of his over-zealousness. She states that only people who are entangled in greed gather more than they need.

Ommanava mīr̤i immanadalli tandiri,
idu nimma manavo, Basavaṇṇana anumānada cittavo?
Ī mātu Mārayyapriya Amalēśvaraliṅgakke sallada bōna;
alliye suridu banni Mārayyā![87]

Instead of one portion you brought two:
was that your idea or Basava's intelligent mind?
This is not food that pleases
the Immaculate Lord Liṅga, dear to Mārayya.
Drop it where you found it and then come back, Mārayya!

From this vacana, it becomes quite obvious that Lakkamma is all but the traditional submissive spouse. She has a ready tongue and she is completely uncompromising. She is not impressed by her husband's well-meant activity; and she strictly holds on to their principle to gather not more than minimally needed. It is most remarkable that a woman should send her husband publicly back in order to rectify the mistakes which he made in the performance of his occupation. And it is even more remarkable that she claims to know what pleases Lord Liṅga and that she dares to reject the offering gift of her husband. The example of this couple demonstrates that traditional gender roles were considerably altered in the Vīraśaiva community. It became possible for a woman to express her own insight and judgement, and even to correct her husband in public. Of course, not all men within the community will have been submitted to such rather rude correction by their wives; and Mārayya makes an extraordinarily docile impression. But, nevertheless, Lakkamma is portrayed in a role which was hardly conceivable for a married woman outside the radical circumstances at Kalyāṇa. We see a low-caste woman having attained a position in which her opinion and zeal are of great weight. She teaches and corrects her husband and she is apparently full of a self-consciousness which is traditionally incompatible with her sex and birth.

The 'housewives-saints' of Vīraśaivism demonstrate the new patterns of man-woman relations in this community. The occurrence of female ascetism was already rather remarkable; but the full participation in spiritual matters by married women is even more striking.

Female Devotees in the Twelfth Century - Prostitutes

There were also women who neither belonged to the category of female ascetics, nor to that of married women. It is surprising to note that the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa included a rather large number of prostitutes. Not the vacana literature but the hagiographical works constitute the main source regarding this aspect of the Vīraśaiva movement. Several purāṇas (such as the Basavapurāṇa and the Cannabasavapurāṇa) and similar scriptures give colourful descriptions of the prostitutes and their clientele. Naturally, it is not very easy to use such kind of literature in order to reconstruct historical situations; because the hagiographical authors tended to enormous exaggerations and miraculous fabrications. Nevertheless, the basis of their stories is certainly the history of Basava and his contemporaries; and it is not impossible to draw some conclusions from their fantastic descriptions.

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[86] *Śūnyasampādane* XII:13-22.
[87] LAKKAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 81 (*Śūnyasampādane* XII:22).

The prostitutes are usually mentioned in connection with a special category of religious mendicants, the so-called sensual jaṅgamas (miṇḍa jaṅgama, viṭa jaṅgama, or sukhi jaṅgama). Unlike the ordinary jaṅgamas, they are said not to have renounced enjoyment and desire, including sexual passion. It is quite probable that these unrestrained mendicants belonged to one of the Tantra schools. The Kāpālikas, in particular, seem to fit into the picture. They practised a devotion (bhakti) to Śiva in his terrible form of Bhairava; and their presence in twelfth century Karnataka is attested by several inscriptions.[88] They were known for their indulgence in meat and wine, as well as sexual intercourse. The reason for this unascetic behaviour was not a materialist conviction but a method of spiritual achievement which was generally followed in Tantra circles. The method is usually indicated as 'the five ma-sounds' (pañcamakāra): meaning liquor (madya), meat (māṃsa), fish (matsya), aphrodisiac cereals (mudrā), and coition (maithuna). It was believed that the adept could come into contact with the divine world by sexual union with a woman, preceded by taking the four stimulating ingredients.

The Vīraśaiva sources indicate that the spiritual community at Kalyāṇa attracted many wandering ascetics from various schools. It is not hard to imagine that Tantra mendicants too found their way to Basava's centre. Indeed, the earliest hagiographical work, Harihara's Basavarājadēvara ragaḷe (circa 1200), already mentions 'sensual jaṅgamas'.[89] Later works of this kind give more detailed descriptions of such jaṅgamas living in the houses of prostitutes (vēśye) at Kalyāṇa.[90] Nowadays, there are still some cave dwellings at Kalyāṇa which are locally believed to have been the residences of the prostitutes and their jaṅgama lovers.[91]

Here, we follow the accounts of the rather early Basavapurāṇamu, written in Telugu by Pālkuriki Sōmanātha, probably at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The prostitutes are, for the first time, indicated in a eulogy to Basava. One of his virtues is said to have been that he gave everything to devotees who visited him. It is told that some men asked for sexual pleasures and were served by him with 'the gems among women'.[92] Especially the sensual jaṅgamas are mentioned, living in the houses of the courtesans, who were provided three times a day by

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[88] For the Kāpālikas, see: David N. LORENZEN, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, Berkeley / Los Angeles, 1972, pp. 13-95.

[89] HARIHARA, *Basavarājadēvara ragaḷe* XII, l. 104.

[90] BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* VI:33; VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa* LVII (trl. p. 194).

[91] P.B. DESAI, *Basavēśvara and His Times*, Dharwar, 1968, p. 358.

[92] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* II (trl. p. 70).

Basava with large quantities of food and other necessities. They are said to have been twelve thousand in number.[93] It might give the impression that the sensual jaṅgamas constituted a majority at Kalyāṇa; but that is certainly not intended. The total number of jaṅgamas who were the guests of the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa is given in the Basavapurāṇamu as one hundred and ninety six thousand. The numbers have, of course, no historical value as such: they form a typical example of the poetic exaggerations of the hagiographical authors. But, taken as an indication of proportions, the numbers demonstrate that a rather small part of the mendicants were sensual jaṅgamas.

The women who served the sensual jaṅgamas are described in the Basavapurāṇamu as rich and luxurious. A beautiful illustration is given in the story about the dress of Basava's wife.[94] The maidservant of one of the courtesans saw Basava's wife Gaṅgāmbike one day in an extremely opulent dress. She told it to her mistress and suggested to her that her lover should ask Basava to present that garment to him. The courtesan said to the jaṅgama who lived with her: 'If you really love me, you will go at once and get the cloth that Basava's wife wears. And you will give it to me.' The jaṅgama obeyed her in her avaricious order and went to Basava's residence. When he made his request, Basava summoned his wife and began to pull off her saree. But the cloth seemed to multiply while it was pulled off; and the valuable cloth lay in big heaps on the floor. Finally, the jaṅgama asked Basava to stop; because he was afraid that his courtesan would become angry if he came home too late. He left the palace with an enormous quantity of cloth without having seen Basava's wife undressed. The motif of the multiplying cloth is not very remarkable: it already occurs in the stories about Draupadī in the Mahābhārata.[95] But this story is important because it gives some insight into the relations between the courtesans and their lovers. It appears that, unlike married women, the courtesans were rather dominant. The woman in this story commands her lover; and he is her lackey in her lucrative business, without protesting. It is also obvious that she lives in great luxury: she has a servant and she is used to rich gifts. The maid describes her mistress' luxury colourfully by enumerating not less than fifty-seven valuable sorts of cloth which have been presented by her various lovers.

The great luxury of the prostitutes is also the theme of the hilarious story of Innocent Saṅgayya.[96] This devotee saw one evening the crowd of sensual jaṅgamas going to visit the prostitutes. Since they were jaṅgamas, Saṅgayya assumed that they were going out for some kind of liṅga-worship. Therefore, he asked Basava permission to join the jaṅgamas. Basava consented and made him visit a young courtesan who was a great devotee. Saṅgayya, however, was with reason called innocent (mugdha). He did not understand anything of worldly entertainment: and he interpreted everything he saw in a religious way. He took his seat in front of the woman's bed instead of upon it; because he thought that it was the place where she performed liṅga-worship. He asked the woman why she was not dressed up like a jaṅgama. She explained all the elements of her appearance in terms that he could understand: the turmeric on her body was just another kind of ashes; her pearl necklace was the same as a rudrākṣa rosary; the tassels at the ends of her necklaces were her way of wearing matted hair like Śaiva ascetics; and the rich saree which covered her body was basically the same as the jaṅgama's loincloth. Saṅgayya was delighted and he spent the night by performing all sorts of liṅga-rituals, assisted by dancing courtesans. The author uses the story of the simple devotee to give detailed descriptions of the magnificent mansions where the prostitutes lived. He tells about steps of quartz, golden floors, plaster of musk with designs made with pearls, large gems as lamps, and pleasant fragrances. Although the lyrical description has, of course, not much historical value, it is, nevertheless, an indication that prostitution was not an unrewarding business.

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[93] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* II (trl. p. 71).

[94] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* III (trl. pp. 91-93); cf. BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* X.

[95] *Mahābhārata* II:61:34-52.

[96] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* III (trl. pp. 93-97); cf. BHĪMAKAVI, *Basavapurāṇa* XI.

The accounts in the Basavapurāṇamu and other hagiographical works about the courtesans who served the sensual jaṅgamas have most probably a historical core. Certainly, there were also Tantra mendicants among the large masses of religious men who visited Kalyāṇa. And it is not unlikely that they found, in the Vīraśaiva community, women who lived by prostitution and could be their partners for some time. The institution of dedicating girls to temples was wide-spread in Śaiva circles. They were usually described as 'sūḷe' (prostitute) which emphasizes their sexual function, although they also performed ritual functions in the temples as dancers and singers.[97] We can imagine that a number of these temple girls followed the new devotional movement of Basava. Actually, we know about one female vacanakāra who is identified in the texts as a prostitute (sūḷe): Saṅkavve. She might have been one of the temple girls. At least, she was not married; because no husband's name is added to her name. Unfortunately, only one of Saṅkavve's vacanas has been preserved. But it is a significant text which gives a good impression of the prostitute's spirituality.

Otteya hiḍidu mattotteya hiḍiye.
Hiḍidaḍe battale nilisi koluvarayyā.
Vratahīnananaṛidu beredaḍe,
kāda kattiyalli kai kivi mūga koyvarayyā.
Ollenolle ballenāgi, nimmāṇe Nirlajjēśvarā.[98]

I took a pledge, I shall not take another one.
If I would do so, they would strip me naked and kill me.
If I would deliberately associate myself with one
who breaks the vow,
they would chop off my hands, ears and nose with a glowing knife.
I will certainly not do so knowingly,
that is our oath,
O Lord of No Shame.

[97] Aloka PARASHER, Usha NAIK, 'Temple Girls of Medieval Karnataka', *IESHR*, Vol. XXIII, 1986, pp. 64-91.

[98] SAṄKAVVE, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 236.

The theme of this poem is monotheism: the true devotee has to be loyal to the only Lord, Śiva. The bond with Śiva, effected by liṅga-initiation, does not allow any association with other deities. In order to emphasize this point, Saṅkavve uses similes from her professional background. Apparently, a sūḷe did not receive men indiscriminately; she committed herself for some time to one lover who maintained her. When she had accepted his gift, she was obliged by that pledge and could not take gifts from other men. If she was not loyal to her lover, she would deserve shame and punishment. In the same way, the devotees of the Vīraśaiva congregation punish every renegade who betrays the bond with Śiva by associating with other gods. In her ardent style, Saṅkavve not only stresses the loyalty to Śiva; she also reveals the morality of her professional life.

Next to the women who were dedicated in their youth to this vocation, there were also married women who prostituted themselves. In the lower castes, it was not unusual for a woman to try to gain some income by prostitution. In the previous chapter, we already met a certain Gaṅgamma whose name is given in full as 'Hādarada kāyakada Mārayyagaḷa puṇyastrī Gaṅgamma' which means 'Gaṅgamma, the meritorious wife of Mārayya with the vocation of prostitution'.[99] It is striking that an apparently low-caste woman with a degraded occupation is designated with such a honorific term as 'puṇyastrī' - meritorious woman. In recent times, the term 'puṇyastrī' has given rise to some speculation. M.M. Kalaburgi suggested in an article - which caused great commotion in the Liṅgāyata community - that the term 'puṇyastrī' would have been used for women from a low caste who lived as concubines with Vīraśaiva devotees. He mentions sixteen women who bear that title. Among them there are a considerable number of vacanakāras. This would explain, in his opinion, why so many women wrote vacanas: for, traditionally, arts were practised by prostitutes and concubines in particular. The term 'puṇyastrī' would be an euphemism of the same order as the term 'Harijana' with which Gandhi denoted the untouchables.[100] Kalaburgi's theory is very interesting; but it lacks a solid basis of textual evidence. It is hardly imaginable that all the 'meritorious women', including some prominent vacanakāras, were low-caste prostitutes. In a later article, Kalaburgi had to admit that the term 'puṇyastrī' is also used in the Kannaḍa literature for high-caste women.[101] But it remains a fact that the multiform Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa included a number of prostitutes: mainly unmarried courtesans, but some married women as well.

Twelfth Century Vacanas - Married Life and Ritual Purity

Finally, we return to the vacana literature in order to see how the emancipation of women is reflected in the poetical texts of the leaders of the Vīraśaiva movement. We focus especially on the married women; because they constituted, as we have seen, the best evidence for the emancipatory effect of the movement. Some vacanas are already quoted in which the equality of men and women was preached; and the androgyne verses gave evidence of a new understanding of sex distinction. But, now, we shall examine some texts which highlight the practice of married life: in particular the interaction of husband and wife and the division of roles between them. Apparently, this is not a usual theme for the great vacanakāras: there are only a few texts on these topics. But, although few, these poems contain interesting and revealing ideas.

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[99] See pages 108-109. Cf. GAṄGAMMA, in: R.C. HIRĒMAṬHA [ed], *Ippattēḷu Śivaśaraṇeyara vacanagaḷu*, 219.

[100] M.M. KALABURGI, *Mārga*, samputa 1, Bangalore, 1988, pp. 309-311; cf. pp. 312-315.

[101] KALABURGI, *Mārga*, samputa 1, pp. 312-315.

First, there is an interesting vacana written by Basava himself. It seems to be a simple, descriptive verse; but it contains a message hidden in a striking simile.

Gaṇḍa Śivaliṅgadēvara bhakta;
hendati māri masaṇiya bhakte!
Gaṇḍa kombudu pādōdakaprasāda;
hendati kombudu suremāṃsa!
Bhāṇḍabhājana śuddhavilladavara bhakti
hendada maḍakeya hor̤age toḷedante,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā![102]

The husband is a worshipper
of the divine Śivaliṅga,
- his wife worships
the goddess of the graves.
The husband takes
holy water and holy gifts,
- his wife takes
liquor and meat.
The worship of people
with unclean pots and pans
is like washing a brandy-jar
only on the outside,
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers!

The picture of the couple in this poem is quite clear. The man is a Śaiva devotee; and he worships the liṅga as a symbol of God. But his wife has remained an adherent of traditional cults; because she worships the goddess Durgā in her terrible form of the devouring goddess of the graveyard. Two types of worship are opposed: the new, elevated cult of the abstract symbol of God and the old, crude sacrificial practice to the cruel goddess of death. In the new cult, the man is sanctified by the holy water, which the guru dispenses, and the holy gifts from the offerings. At the same time, his wife is polluted by the liquor and meat, which are shared at the sacrifices of the old cults. The crux of this opposition is that, in mythological tradition, Durgā is considered to be the wife of Śiva: and, so, the contrast on earth reflects a contrast in supermundane spheres. The poet suggests that such a twofold religion is very dangerous in a household. Since it is the woman who works in the ritually most important room, the kitchen, she will defile the whole life of the household if she adheres to impure practices. Outward appearance, determined by the man, might be pure; but pollution has affected the centre of the house. The devotion of the husband has

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102. BASAVA, 104 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 34; ARYA, p. 12).

become worthless because of the 'unclean pots and pans' of his wife. The conclusion is clearly expressed in a metaphor: his devotion is like cleaning a brandy-jar on the outside only. A highly polluted object like a vessel that has contained toddy can, obviously, only be clean when it is thoroughly washed on the inside. Likewise, the woman's world must be cleaned in order to make the whole household pure. Apparently, women can be very dangerous; because they are able to pollute the whole household. In order to stress that point, Basava makes a word-play with the words for 'wife' (heṇḍati) and for 'of brandy' (heṇḍada), and so all emphasis lies on the dangerous aspect of female activity.

This reasoning stresses the important position of women, albeit in a negative way. The religious practices of husband and wife are made interdependent. The husband cannot act autonomously in spiritual matters; because his ritual purity is also determined by the practice of his wife. It was, probably, not exceptional in the beginning that men chose to join the Vīraśaiva community whilst their wives remained loyal to the old ritual tradition. Therefore, Basava calls on the women to be aware of the importance of their religious practice and to abandon polluting activities.

Basava was not the first vacanakāra to stress this point: already Dēvara Dāsimayya, the eleventh century forerunner of Vīraśaivism, expressed the same consideration in his vacanas.

> Gaṇḍa bhaktanāgi heṇḍati bhaviyādaḍe
> uṇḍa ūṭa ibbarigū saribhāga.
> Satta nāya tandaṭṭada mēle iḷuhi
> obbaroppacciya hañcikoṇḍu timbante,
> kāṇā Rāmanāthā.[103]

> If the husband is a devotee
> and the wife is an unbeliever,
> it is still the same meal
> which they are eating.
> Oh look, *Lord of Rāma*,
> it is like sharing as food
> little bits of a dead dog
> which they have hidden in the attic.

Dāsimayya, the weaver-poet, uses here rather crude figurative language. In his imagination, the height of impurity is to eat carrion, particularly a dead dog. Hence, he depicts the strange situation of a couple who had hidden a dog's carcass in the attic and regularly bring down little bits of it to enjoy together as a delicacy. The meaning of this strange metaphor is evident. It is a strong repudiation of mixed marriage. A man who practises true devotion to Śiva must be followed by his wife in this devotion. Otherwise, his purity will be spoilt by the defiling rituals in which his wife is engaged. A bhakta who is married with such a woman has hidden a polluting force in his house; and he partakes of the pollution through the common meals, prepared under impure circumstances. So, the message of Dāsimayya's poem is that women must share the ritual purity of their husbands: they too need to be devotees.

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[103] DĀSIMAYYA, 55 (cf. RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 102).

Although the vacanas quoted above point to the importance of the women's religious practice, they depart from a negative idea: the risk of pollution of the household by women. This reasoning could have strengthened the position of women in the Vīraśaiva movement; but it can hardly be the source of any female self-consciousness. There are, however, also a few vacanas in which the position of married women is depicted in a more positive way.

In the first place, there is another relevant vacana by Dēvara Dāsimayya.

> Satipatigaḷondāda bhakti hitavāgippudu Śivaṅge,
> satipatigaḷondāgadavana bhakti amṛtadoḷu viṣa beṟedante,
> kāṇā Rāmanāthā.[104]

The devoṭion of wife and husband who have beçome one
pleases Śiva,
but look, *Lord of Rāma*,
the devotion of him who has not become one with his wife
is stiff like nectar which contains poison.

It is a simple text which hardly needs any explanation. If man and wife go different ways with regard to religion, devotion loses its value. It becomes dead and resembles the effect of drinking poisoned nectar: rigor mortis. The nectar which contains poison is an image of the divine gift that can be spoilt by human beings. Therefore, a man should be careful that his devotion is not defiled by the polluting activities of his wife. This is the usual theme as we saw before; but, in this poem, it is preceded by a statement in a positive tone. The opening line of the verse expresses the value of shared devotion to Śiva witin a marriage. If bhakti is practised by wife and husband in complete unity, it is in particular pleasing to God.

We find the same thought in a vacana written by the great ascetic saint Allama Prabhu. It is a beautiful little poem about the relationship of man and woman and their common devotion.

> Ubhayadṛṣṭi inadṛṣṭiyalli kābante,
> dampati ēkabhāvavāgi nindalli,
> Guhēśvaraliṅgakke arpitavāyittu,
> Saṅganabasavaṇṇā![105]

If man and wife stand together unanimously,
as both eyes are peering at the sun,
it is an offering to the Liṅga, *the Lord of the Caves*,
O Basava of the Confluence.

The poem is adressed to Basava; but this is most probably a later addition. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane, the vacana occurs in the course of a discussion between Basava, Allama and Āyidakki Mārayya, on the occasion of a sumptuous dinner presented by the latter's wife to a multitude of devotees. In this construction, Allama's vacana is a reply to a poem by Basava; and, therefore, the compilers of the Śūnyasaṃpādane will have added the vocative phrase. The meaning of the text is, however, not affected by this addition. Allama depicts the value of a harmonious marriage by means of an example taken from ascetic practice.

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104. DĀSIMAYYA, 54.
105. ALLAMA, 1122 (also in the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*: XII:45).

He was accomplished in yoga and, consequently, he was familiar with such practices as he describes here. Nevertheless, it is rather surprising that he uses it as a simile in this context of a householder's life. There were ascetics who tried to attain a certain trance through constantly peering at the sun. Both eyes play, of course, the same role in this act and contribute equally to the achievement. The harmony of man and wife reminds the poet of this equal activity of the two eyes. And just as the sun-vision of the yogi is a suitable penance for making contact with the divine world, so the unanimity of man and wife is a proper offering to the Liṅga. Their harmony and common devotion is like a sacrifice which is fit for acceptance by God.

It is remarkable that a highly accomplished ascetic, such as Allama, sings the praises of married life. However, we must not forget that, in his opinion, family life acquires another character through devotional progress. The distinctions and the passions of worldly life are vanishing if man and wife follow the path of bhakti, as is explained in the next vacana.

Sati bhakteyādaḍe holegañjalāgadu,
pati bhaktanādaḍe kulakañjalāgadu.
Satipatiyemba aṅgasukha hiṅgi
liṅgave patiyāda baḷika,
satige patiyuṇṭe? patige satiyuṇṭe?
Pāluṇḍu mēlumbare Guhēśvarā?[106]

If a woman has become a devotee,
she should not heed pollution anymore;
if her husband has become a devotee,
he should not heed caste distinctions anymore.
After the physical pleasures of man and wife have faded away
and the Liṅga itself has become their husband:
- is there still a husband for the wife?
- is there still a wife for the husband?
Should we eat anything more after the dessert,
O Lord of the Caves?

The poet expresses the view that life changes completely by joining the band of Vīraśaiva devotees. Both man and woman will experience new values and a new style of life. For the woman, the usual fear of pollution disappears; in particular is meant the lochia which was considered to be highly defiling. This change in purity conception inside the house is paralleled by a similar change outside; because the man does not fear anymore the pollution in interpersonal contact: distinctions determined by birth have lost their force. Consequently, there is a new liberty for women in domestic life; and barriers between people of different castes are removed in social life. But the marital relationship itself changes as well; because eroticism loses its attraction in the course of mystical progress; and sexuality fades into the background. The argument is again that the Liṅga becomes the devotee's husband.[107] And if divine presence is experienced so intensely that it resembles marriage, normal marital life has lost its significance. Therefore, Allama can exclaim: 'Is there still a husband for the wife; is there still a wife for the husband?' After these rhetorical questions, he concludes his vacana with a startling end. He makes the curious comparison with an elaborate meal which ends with the dessert: after that course, nobody will ask for food anymore. The word 'pāluṇḍu', here translated as 'dessert', denotes a certain kind of sweet which is eaten as the last course of a meal. Another name for the same dish is 'pīyūṣapiṇḍa' which means 'ball of ambrosia'; so the meaning of divine food is involved in this expression. Thus the poet wants emphasize that sexual life is abandoned because both man and wife are already satisfied by the divine love. Whoever has finished his meal with the food of the gods, will not have an appetite for common food anymore.

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[106] ALLAMA, 148 (cf. PURANIK, nr. 42).
[107] See especially SIDDHARĀMA's vacana quoted on page 151.

Pollution is an important concept in Allama's vacana, particularly with regard to the life of women. Observance of purity rules is not necessary anymore; because pollution cannot affect the life of true devotees. This is the common opinion among the vacanakāras. Its classical expression is found in Basava's famous vacana:

Holeyuṇṭe liṅgaviddeḍeyalli? .....[108]
Is there pollution where the Liṅga is? .....

The conviction of the purifying power of the liṅga eliminates all kinds of ritual uncleanness. It had a great impact on the position of low-caste people who had always been regarded as permanently polluted. But it was also very important for women; for menstruation and child-birth were traditionally considered to be the main sources of pollution as well. For Basava, there remained only one source of pollution: cults of other deities, especially in the traditional folk religion with its magic and its blood sacrifices.

However, there was a certain difference of opinion among the Vīraśaiva leaders on this subject. Whereas Basava and most of the other vacanakāras regarded pollution as non-existant for devotees, some authors tended towards the idea that pollution must still be eradicated by the devotees. Cannabasava was the main exponent of thet trend. The following vacana reveals his divergent approach.

Hole hole endanayyā Basavaṇṇa,
hole huṭṭida mūṟu dinakke piṇḍakke neleyāyittu.
Nararige hole, surarige hole, Haribrahmādigaḷige hole.
Intī holeyalli huṭṭi, holeyanatigaḷedenemba
ubhayabhraṣṭara makhava nōḍalāgadu,
Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēvā.[109]

Basava said: 'Pollution, pollution!
The implantation of the embryo takes place
at the third day of the occurrence of pollution.'
There is pollution for men, for gods, for Hari and Brahmā.
Therefore, *O Lord of the Lovely Confluence*,
I cannot see the faces of those wicked men
who deny pollution although they are born in pollution.

In Cannabasava's view, pollution is everywhere and affects all life.

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[108] BASAVA, 769; see pages 34-35.
[109] CANNABASAVA, 390.

Even gods, even the high gods Viṣṇu (Hari) and Brahmā, are subject to polluting forces. Only Śiva seems to be excluded. Consequently, it is sheer folly for ordinary human beings to deny the existence of pollution. People who do so are wicked; because they pretend to be exempted from something which contaminates every birth and, as a result, every individual. They are called 'double-bad' (ubhaya-bhraṣṭa) because of their double standards: regarding others as impure and pretending themselves to be as pure as Śiva. Apparently, Cannabasava wants to teach the devotees that they should recognize the impurity of their life and, thereupon, strive to expel the contamination. The most remarkable aspect of the vacana, however, is that the author quotes Basava in order to strengthen his argument. The source is most probably Basava's famous vacana:

> Holegaṇḍallade piṇḍada nelegāśrayavilla.
> Jala-binduvina vyavahāra ondē:
> āseyāmiṣarōṣaharuṣa viṣayādigaḷellā onde.
> Ēnanōdi, ēna kēḷi, ēnu phala?
> Kulajanembudakke āvudu dṛṣṭa? .....[110]

> There is no implantation of the embryo without pollution.
> The emission of sperm is always the same:
> desire and lust, passion and excitement, all sensualities are the same.
> Whatever you read or learn, what is the fruit of it?
> Which visible criteria are there to say: well-born? .....

But Cannabasava presents a drastic reinterpretation. Basava used the concept of pollution to emphasize the equality of all human beings, in spite of caste distinctions. For him, it was only a useful argument in his struggle against caste; but he certainly did not intend to give weight to pollution or to promote purity rules. Cannabasava, however, uses Basava's words to convince the devotees of the importance of pollution: it is a strong force in life and, so, alertness is necessary. This reinterpretation is typical of the changes in the Vīraśaiva teachings after Basava had passed away and Cannabasava took over the leadership. A more Brāhmaṇa-oriented ethics became predominant, especially with regard to purity observance.

Another vacana of Cannabasava elucidates the concept of purity. It makes concrete what kind of pollution must be counteracted by the devotee.

> Jātisūtaka biḍadu, jananasūtaka biḍadu, prētasūtaka biḍadu,
> rajassūtaka biḍadu, ucchiṣṭasūtaka biḍadu, kulasūtaka biḍadu!
> Ivaranentu bhaktarembe? Ivaranentu yuktarembe?
> Śrīgurusvāmi śiṣyana pūrvāśrayava kaḷedu,
> hastamastakasaṃyōgava māḍi upadēśavanitta baḷika
> kāḍgiccina kaiyalli karaḍava koysidantirabēku bhaktanu.
> Hinde munde medeyilla.
> Idu kāraṇa, Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēvayyā,
> sadbhaktaṅge sūtakava māḍalu illa.[111]

> The pollution of caste not removed,
> pollution of childbirth not removed,

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110. BASAVA, 589; see pages 59-60.
111. CANNABASAVA, 316. See also 642.

pollution of death not removed,
pollution of menstruation not removed,
pollution of spittle not removed,
pollution of clan not removed, -
how can they call themselves devotees,
how can they call themselves united [with God]?
The teacher removes the former attachments of his pupil,
and when the instruction has been made
and the [teacher's] hand is laid on the head,
the devotee must be as one who performs straw-cutting
by means of a forest fire:
before him and behind him, there is no stack of straw.
Therefore, *O Lord of the Lovely Confluence*,
there is nothing that causes pollution to the true devotee.

Cannabasava states that initiation into the spiritual community should involve the removal of all pollution. Initiation, characterized by the guru laying his hand on the pupil's head, is so powerful that every kind of pollution disappears. It has the same effect as the devastating forest fire which destroys all straw on the fields. But, in practice, there are devotees who are not free from pollution. They call themselves devotees, or they even pretend to be united with the divine world; but their life is still affected by pollution. This demonstrates that they are not at all true devotees. What kind of pollution does Cannabasava discover among the Vīraśaiva devotees? He mentions six forms of pollution, following a classical Brāhmaṇa distinction, usually limited to five forms (pañcasūtaka: without kulasūtaka as almost identical with jātisūtaka). Two of these forms of pollution specifically concern women: childbirth, and menstruation. It appears that Cannabasava revived to some extent the traditional purity observance with its strong limitations for women. Of course, the message of his vacana is that pollution can be removed by the spiritual force of the guru: by initiation and all other kinds of rituals. But it is another approach than that of Basava, who ignored almost completely the traditional purity rules and thus removed a great burden from the women in the community.

However, all vacanakāras agreed that women were allowed to share in the spiritual experience. This gave a new dimension to married life among the devotees, as we have seen. A relationship could be experienced on a higher level: where God-realization holds a prominent place and physical desires are not felt anymore. Now, it will be interesting to read a vacana written by a married man who experienced the relationship with his wife on this level. Mōḷigeya Mārayya composed a poignant vacana on the bond with his wife, who supported him along his spiritual path and shared his sorrow and delight.

Satvageṭṭalli kāṣṭhavanūṛi naḍeyabēku.
Mattatvaviddalli niścayava hēḷalāgi
mahāprasādavendu kaikoḷabēku.
Enna bhaktige nī śaktiyāda kāraṇa,
enna satyakke nī satiyāda kāraṇa,
enna sukhaduḥkha ninna sukhaduḥkha, anyavilla.

Idakke bhinnabhēdavēnu hēḷā
Niḥkaḷaṅkamallikārjunā?[112]
When someone has lost his strength,
he has to walk with a stick.
When one's mind gets weak
and speaking with certainty is over,
one has to accept
what is given as grace.
So you are the power of my devotion,
so you are the wife of my truth,
my pleasure and pain is your pleasure and pain,
not else it is!
Tell me, *Immaculate Lord of the Jasmines*,
what difference is therein?

The figurative language of this vacana is borrowed from the experiences of old age. When a man grows old, he has to accept that his self-reliance is affected. When his strength diminishes, he has to make use of a walking-stick. It can even occur that he grows demented and is not able to arrange for his food, so that he becomes dependent on the mercy of the people around him. With these similes, the poet wants to elucidate the development of the spiritual seeker. At the beginning of his quest, he can rely on his own insight and abilities; but, when he moves on, he becomes more and more dependent on others who have already attained advanced stages of mystical experience. For Mārayya, his wife is obviously the first one to support him on this exploratory expedition. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane, the verse is part of a long discussion between the spouses on their solidarity and achievements. Not all the vacanas will have been composed originally in this context; but the poem here quoted fits extremely well in the marital conversation. It can hardly be imagined that the adressee was originally someone other than his wife Mahādēviyamma. Mārayya describes how his wife supports him and leads him on the spiritual path. She is the female power (śakti) behind his devotion; she is the partner (sati) accompanying his experience of truth. She shares life's joys and sorrows with him, particularly on their common mystical quest. Therefore, Mārayya can conclude his vacana with a rhetorical question addressed to God: 'What difference is therein?'; because he and his wife have transcended duality. Their unity as man and wife has become a reflection of the ultimate unity between man and God. Mārayya's vacana demonstrates clearly that Vīraśaiva mysticism could result in a striking solidarity between husband and wife.

Finally, we quote a vacana of Basava, in which the same topic of solidarity between husband and wife is expressed; but in a way which could almost be called modern. Here, marriage seems not only to be seen as an aid to spirituality but as an independent value as well.

Satipuruṣaribbarū pratidṛṣṭiyāgi māḍaballaḍe
ade māṭa,
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvara kūḍuva kūṭa.[113]

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[112] MŌḶIGEYA MĀRAYYA, quoted from *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XIII:36.
[113] BASAVA 1198 (cf. ARYA, p. 99).

> If a man and his wife can look at one another,
> that is really beauty,
> that is really the union that unites with
> *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers.*

The little poem centres round the concept of union. It depicts the union of man and woman in marriage in one single but impressive image. A man and his wife look at one another: they are face to face. But such a contact is not achieved without effort. If a man and a woman are able to establish that contact, it is proof of a true relationship: a real union. And such a union has a twofold effect. First, it is described as beauty or elegance: it has a value in itself. But, then, it is also the way to spiritual progress; because this human relationship brings people on a divine plane. Basava expresses the latter notion by a wordplay with the word for 'union' or 'meeting' (kūḍu): it is a union uniting with the uniting-river God. And thus the little poem reflects the typically Vīraśaiva conviction that spirituality can be realized in everyday life. World renunciation is not necessary to attain the union with God; on the contrary, the marriage relationship can be the way to the divine union. And, besides, the union of man and woman has its own significance; and it can be esteemed highly: as a thing of beauty.

The Twelfth Century - Concluding Remarks

Our survey of twelfth century material on the position of women in the Vīraśaiva movement comes to an end. We found many elucidating texts and interesting life stories of female devotees. But first must be noted what we did not find. In the texts of the Vīraśaiva authors of this period, we do not come across the abusive condemnation of women as the root of all evil, which is so widespread in medieval Indian religious literature. The contempt and fear which determine the attitude towards women in the Dharmaśāstras is almost totally absent in the vacana literature. This points to a new understanding of the dignity of women. Only a few vacanas by Basava against adulterous women have a leaning towards the classical contempt for women; but we discovered that these verses contain a hidden meaning which explains their fierceness. They are intended to warn not only against adultery but against polytheistic practices as well.

The admonitions to the male followers of the movement not to associate with other women are, as such, not very surprising. We saw several examples in which this admonition did not surpass the average level of warning against all coveting of someone else's goods. There were, however, also several vacanas in which not the seductive force of women, gold, and land was the theme but the illusive temptation in one's own mind. This could lead to a radical appeal to ascetic celibacy, as we found it in the vacanas of Allama and Siddharāma. But much more interesting was the way in which Basava dealt with this temptation and incited the devotees not to suppress their senses but to aim at purity in marriage.

The new value system of Vīraśaivism included a new orientation on intersexual relationships. A remarkable feature in this respect is the conviction that man and woman are essentially equal. Dēvara Dāsimayya had already propagated this idea in the eleventh century; but he remained a voice in the wilderness. Now, the time was ripe and his vacanas on this topic became popular and were imitated by several vacanakāras. The theme of equality of man and woman could even lead to a figurative language of androgyny. The typical Vīraśaiva mysticism of the śaraṇasthala, in which the devotee considered himself to be the wife of the Lord, contributed definitely to the androgyne style of poetry. For women devotees it was an attractive metaphorical language; because it enabled them to get rid of a femaleness which had many negative social connotations. Women acquired a new self-awareness by the new ideas of equality and the wordplay of androgyny.

The life stories of some of the female saints gave a good impression of the position of women in the movement. It is astonishing to learn that the discourses in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' were made by men and women on an equal level. Highly unconventional ascetics such as Mahādēviyakka found a place in the spiritual capital Kalyāṇa. In her, Vīraśaivism has its most accomplished female mystic and poet. Also a profound philosopher like Muktāyakka could develop her talents in the company of the devotees. The female ascetics, however, were not the most remarkable characters among the women of Basava's fold; because their way of life was modelled on the classical pattern of world-renunciation. A completely new phenomenon was the participation of married women in the movement. Among the 'housewives-saints', Nīlamma was probably the most brilliant and independent thinker. Mahādēviyamma was also a very influential teacher and poet. Both had the advantage of a privileged position in the community; but there were also women devotees of lower background. The working women in the community (kāyakada Śivaśaraṇeyaru) constitute a convincing proof that the revolutionary ideas of the vacanakāras about the equality of men and women led to new opportunities for women, even from traditionally unlearned circles. It is not too amazing that the men in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' were willing to listen to a former queen, an impressive ascetic woman, or the wife of their great leader; but it is almost incredible that low- caste women like spinners, rice pounders, and sweepers found an audience for their experiences on the spiritual path. Women who were thus far not supposed to have their own opinions in religious affairs showed a surprising self-assurance and made a considerable contribution to the creation of a community in which man-woman relations were determined by new values. Even prostitutes had an accepted place in the new spiritual community.

This new position of women was made possible by the leaders of the Vīraśaiva movement, who deliberately tried to make use of the talents and the experiences of the female devotees. It is true that a certain fear of possible negative influences of undevout women played a role in their considerations. And not all authors followed Basava in his radical rejection of purity observance. But, generally, women were accepted as equal to men. And all Vīraśaiva leaders agreed that women could attain the same spiritual heights as men. We have seen how Mōḷigeya Mārayya praised his wife as the power (śakti) of his devotion; for him the common experience of spirituality was a reflection of the ultimate unity between man and God. Then, it is not surprising that women are sometimes portrayed as no less than the Divine itself.

Tā māḍida heṇṇu tanna taleyanēṟittu.
Tā māḍida heṇṇu tanna toḍeyanēṟittu.
Tā māḍida heṇṇu Brahmana nālageyanēṟittu.
Tā māḍida heṇṇu Nārāyaṇana edeyanēṟittu.
Adu kāraṇa,
heṇṇu heṇṇalla, heṇṇu rākṣasiyalla:
heṇṇu pratyakṣa Kapilasiddhamallikārjuna nōḍā![114]

The woman whom he created
climbed on his head.
The woman whom he created
climbed on his lap.
The woman whom he created
climbed on Brahmā's tongue.
The woman whom he created
climbed against Viṣṇu's chest.
Therefore,
a woman is not just a female;
a woman is not a demon either;
but a woman is really
the Eminent Lord of the Jasmines!

With a reference to mythological accounts, Siddharāma describes the exalted position of woman. Śiva has created several goddesses for him and the other gods; and all these female deities are especially dear to their respective partners. They cling to their husbands, as can be seen in the way they are depicted: Gaṅgā seated on Śiva's head and Pārvatī on his lap, Sarasvatī on Brahmā's tongue, and Lakṣmī leaning against Viṣṇu's chest. If the gods appreciate female company that much, women - even earthly women - cannot be sexual objects or demonic powers; but they must be divine. And, although this poem about the divinity of women is too exalted to give a picture of historical reality, it is significant that Vīraśaiva writers of the twelfth century could speak in this lofty manner about women. The disregard for women which was so deeply rooted in Hindu culture was certainly removed in the Vīraśaiva movement.

Now, we must discover how these inspiring ideas on the position of women developed during the following ages. Were the new relations at Kalyāṇa only a temporary experiment, doomed to failure; or could the Vīraśaivas maintain the revolutionary zeal of the initial stage? What could be preserved of the untraditional conviction that men and women are basically equal? How could the new doctrine be put into practice in other circumstances? In order to answer these questions, we shall gather material from various sources, both literary and ethnographical. As in the preceding chapters, we shall focus on the fifteenth and nineteenth century, and, of course, on modern times.

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[114] SIDDHARĀMA, 1242 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 476).

The Fifteenth Century - Śūnyasaṃpādane

First, we examine the main source of fifteenth century Vīraśaivism: the Śūnyasaṃpādane. It is very interesting to see that this compilation of vacanas contains many texts written by female devotees, as well as several vacanas on the spirituality of women. Unlike the twelfth century ideas about caste, which were too revolutionary for later ages, the female contribution to spirituality is still part of the discussions in the Śūnyasaṃpādane.

Obviously, the fifteenth century authors do not have many problems with the great female ascetics. Already the second chapter of the Śūnyasaṃpādane is totally devoted to the story of Muktāyakka. As could be expected, the compilers give all attention to the episode of her encounter with Allama and, surely, their main interest is to demonstrate the greatness of the divine leader, who is even willing to help and correct a disoriented woman. But, notwithstanding this concentration on Allama, Muktāyakka is lively depicted as an independent and intelligent woman. The discussion between Allama and Muktāyakka concludes with the persuasion by the former; but it is a debate of high quality. The wandering woman is a match for the accomplished sage; and she is not inclined to accept his consolation readily. Initially, she is not at all impressed by the philosophical arguments of Allama. She compares him rather unfavourably with her deceased brother, who had attained the ultimate unity without the need of so many words and deliberations. Allama's reply to her harsh reproach is not only touching, but it also shows how the memory of Muktāyakka was revered in later days.

> .....
> Namma Guhēśvaraliṅgakke
> nīnu karuṇada śiśuvāda kāraṇa
> bāydegedenallade bhinna uṇṭe hēḷā, maruḷe?[115]

> .....
> Because you are the favoured child
> of our *Lord of the Caves*, the Liṅga,
> I opened my mouth,
> did I not? Tell me, you fool!

The compiler of the book emphasizes that Liṅga's favoured child is not very impressed by this recognition. She repeats several times her argument that Allama cannot be truly illuminated; because he still needs to speak. And he is not able to convince her; because, in her eyes, teaching and reasoning are indications that one has not yet realized the ultimate unity. This argument from the pure non-dualistic school (advaita) is incongruent with the philosophy of Allama, in which consciousness and speech can be retained when merging with the Absolute. Only after Allama has clarified this point and has assured that his utterings are free from attachment, Muktāyakka accepts him as a mystic of the same level as her brother. The compiler of the Śūnyasaṃpādane ends his story with the account that Allama reveals to Muktāyakka 'the secret of the spaceless trance' (niravayalasamādhiya bhēda). Evidently, Allama must have the last word; but that does not alter the fact that Muktāyakka stands out in the whole episode as a self-assured woman with a great philosophical insight.

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[115] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* II:30 (ALLAMA, 1376).

Akka Mahādēvi, the other great woman ascetic of the twelfth century, is the principal character in the sixteenth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane. The long chapter narrates her arrival at Kalyāṇa and the critical interrogation by the saints, their final abundant praise, and Akka's journey to Śrīśaila where she attains the consubstantial union with the godhead. The story of the interrogation by the leading Vīraśaivas at Kalyāṇa makes the impression to be coherent. Unlike some other parts of the Śūnyasampādane, where the vacanas are forced into the narrative framework and the editor needs many words to connect the verses, the story is fluent here and some vacanas seem to have been composed especially for this context. Probably, we find in this chapter the twelfth century reflection of the historical controversy, produced by the arrival of the unconventional woman ascetic at Kalyāṇa. And it is only to be expected that Allama, the staunch ascetic of the classical tradition, played the major role in the test of this woman. It could be suggested also that the compilers of the Śūnyasampādane have adapted or rewritten part of the vacanas in this chapter. But why should they have done so whilst, in the other chapters, they apparently leave the classical vacanas intact?

The chapter opens with a rather long introduction, which extols the holiness of the naked woman and reveals Allama's plan of the interrogation 'in order to show concretely to all the saints what a Lust-slayer was'. As first poem is chosen a vacana by Kinnari Brahmayya, a minor author from the twelfth century, which sets the tone with a harsh reproach. It must be made clear that an undressed woman travelling alone does not make the impression of a saint. The most embarrassing aspect, however, is the fact that she is a married lady who left her husband's home. It is Allama who repeatedly asks her in an insulting way to reveal the name of her husband. In three vacanas, Mahādēvi gives the expected answer: she is married with 'the Lovely Lord of the Jasmines'. Although this seems to please Allama, he continues the test and blames her for her inconsistent behaviour: she pretends to have conquered all feelings of shame but, nevertheless, she covers her body with her long hair. Mahādēvi defends herself by explaining that she covers herself in order not to embarrass other people, although she is free from all attachment. Only after a long discussion in which she has to prove again and again her sincere spirituality is she finally accepted by Allama. For this turning point in the story the following vacana is chosen:

Aṅga aṅganeya rūpallade,
mana vastubhāvadalli beccantirpudu.
Banda kathanadalli bandu hiṅgideyallā!
Akka, Guhēśvaraliṅgadalli ubhayanāmavaḷide ennakkā![116]

Your body has a female form,
but your mind is completely one with the Essence.
Because of the story of your coming,

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116. *Śūnyasampādane* XVI:41 (ALLAMA, 1300).

you came and did not stay away.
O Sister, you conquered duality
in the Liṅga, *the Lord of the Caves*,
O my Sister!

This is one of the vacanas which are obviously connected from the beginning with the encounter of Allama and Mahādēvi, now honoured with the title Akka (elder sister). After this recognition by Allama, the book continues with a short interrogation by Basava which seems to be rather superfluous. Then, the leading saints break out in elevated eulogies to their new spiritual sister. Finally, the Śūnyasampādane makes Akka ask Allama where she will attain the ultimate union. He sends her to the famous plantain-grove at Śrīśaila and she starts off. There, she actually achieves the highest union, and the saints at Kalyāṇa, following her in their mind's eye, sing her praises.

It is striking how the compilers of the Śūnyasampādane made a certain selection from the biographical data of Akka. Important for them is her appearance at Kalyāṇa where she is severely tested by the saints. It must be made clear that this unconventional woman was not easily welcomed in the Vīraśaiva community. In the story of the Śūnyasampādane, she is never actually a member of the community at Kalyāṇa, which she certainly was in reality. But the fifteenth century writers let her come and go. She visits the spiritual centre and immediately continues her journey. She is held in high esteem in the Śūnyasampādane; but she is certainly not an example to follow. Nevertheless, Akka's ascetic accomplishment is fully recognized and, in the fifteenth century, she is still one of the greatest saints.

Not only the ascetic women saints play a role in the Śūnyasampādane; but also the 'housewives-saints' of the twelfth century are represented in the book. In the twenty-first chapter, we meet Nīlamma, the favourite wife of Basava. This is the last chapter of the Śūnyasampādane; and it describes how finally all the saints come to the end of their life and attain their heavenly abode. The compilers could not build up this almost mythological account solely on the basis of the old vacanas; but they had to include rather large portions of prose text. In one of these prose inserts, the compilers give their version of the end of the Kalyāṇa community: Basava ordered two of his disciples to kill king Bijjaḷa, and all the other śaraṇas left Kalyāṇa under his leadership; but only Nīlamma stayed in the town. When Basava arrived at the sacred place of Kūḍalasaṅgama, he sent Appaṇṇa back to Kalyāṇa in order to fetch Nīlamma. At this point of the story, the compilers include Nīlamma's beautiful vacana on the ippe-flower quoted before.[117] The poem stresses her solidarity with Basava but, in the course of this narrative, it expresses the view that going one's own way does not affect their mutual bond. Another vacana and a song based on the same opinion are added. So the messenger had to return empty-handed. Then, it is told that Basava attained the unity with the Lord of the Meeting Rivers and how Nīlamma reacted at the passing away of her husband. Several vacanas testify to her admiration for her husband and her grief that she is left behind in loneliness. But Cannabasava consoled his aunt and then she found strength again.

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[117] See pages 177-178.

Aḍaviyalli kaṇṇugeṭṭa paśuvinante
nānu pralāpisuttirdenayyā! ……[118]
I was lamenting like a cow
that cannot see in the forest.....

Consequently, Nīlamma united herself with her personal liṅga and entered the realm of the Absolute.

The Śūnyasaṃpādane honours Nīlamma as an independent and highly spiritual member of the Vīraśaiva community. The remarkable story about her refusal to follow her husband on his flight is neither omitted nor disguised. The compilers of the book seem to share the admiration of the founding fathers for the self-assured woman who let prevail her spiritual quest over the traditional obedience to her husband.

Another prominent married woman was Mahādēviyamma, the wife of Mōḷigeya Mārayya. The thirteenth chapter of the Śūnyasaṃpādane deals with this pious couple. The first part of the chapter is a discussion on the role of money in the community; the main contributors are Mārayya and Basava. In the second part, however, Mahādēviyamma comes into the discussion. Her husband has repeatedly expressed his desire to merge in the Liṅga; and this makes his wife ask critically whether he is not in the Liṅga before that ultimate union. Not less than nine of Mahādēviyamma's vacanas are included to stress the importance of this question. Some of these poems are written in a tone of reproach so that it becomes quite clear who is the teacher and who the pupil. Mārayya's reply in only one vacana is introduced by the compilers with the words: 'Mārayya asked her the true meaning of union with Liṅga'. His wife then expresses in two vacanas her feelings of solidarity with him; because they are united in devotion. He answers with two similar vacanas. Afterwards, the compilers give all attention to the explanations of the union with the Liṅga by Mahādēviyamma, expressed in eleven vacanas. Mārayya is convinced by these verses; and he voices his new insight, which concludes the chapter. Obviously, Mahādēviyamma is portrayed as the guru who imparts her knowledge, whilst her husband is the obedient pupil who accepts her teaching readily. In the first part of the chapter, Mārayya is depicted as a devoted and purposeful man who even dares to criticize Basava. This aspect strengthens the exalted position of his wife in the second half of the chapter. It is surprising that such an untraditional division of roles was accepted by the fifteenth century writers.

It might be suggested that the cases of Nīlamma and Mahādēviyamma could more easily find a place in the Śūnyasaṃpādane because of the prominent position of both ladies in the community: the wife of the leader and a real queen were perhaps permitted some extra self-confidence. There is, however, in the Śūnyasaṃpādane also a low-caste woman who plays an untraditional role. The twelfth chapter is devoted to the story of Āyidakki Mārayya, the rice gleaner, and his wife

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[118] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* XXI:56.

Lakkamma. The first vacanas of the chapter deal with a discussion on the value of labour (kāyaka) between Mārayya and Allama. After the tenth vacana, Lakkamma involves herself in the discussion. Then, the story becomes interesting for our present subject. The compiler narrates how the fearless woman interrupts the meeting of the numerous saints in order to put her husband to work. Two of her vacanas are quoted in this respect; and no vacana of her husband is included here as a reply. Then follows the well-known episode: Mārayya collects in his enthusiasm a double daily ration of rice and his wife abuses him because of his greed. Again, Lakkamma is the only speaker: in ten vacanas she makes her point. The fifteenth century writer declares that Mārayya was abashed and the story takes a similar turn as in the case of Mahādēviyamma and her husband. A vacana of Āyidakki Mārayya is quoted in which he asks when he could realize the ultimate union. But this question, originally directed to God or to one of the great gurus, as it seems, is now addressed to his wife. Lakkamma starts instructing her husband; but, even more critically than Mahādēviyamma, she blames him for his desire for heaven. In this connection, the compiler quotes three of her vacanas. Another vacana of Mārayya follows which repeats his desire to attain the union with the Liṅga, but now explicitly addressed to his wife:

> Andhakaṅge jīvaviddaḍe,
> kaṇṇindale kaṇḍu naḍeyaballane?
> Nī satiyāgi, nā patiyāgi,
> ubhaya prāṇa ēkarūpāgi;
> yōgada aṅgane, Amarēśvaraliṅgava tōṟā.[119]

> A blind man, although he is alive,
> can he walk seeing with his own eyes?
> You are my wife, I am your husband:
> two lives being united.
> Show me *the Immortal Lord Liṅga*,
> O my wife!

Unlike the former vacana, this one fits precisely in the discussion between Mārayya and his wife, or better: the instruction of Mārayya by his wife. The Śūnyasampādane continues with five poems by Lakkamma in which she explains that the service due to guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama (the triple dāsōha) is itself the union with God. This lesson is echoed by her husband in one vacana. Lakkamma now demonstrates that she is able to give practical lessons as well. According to the next vacana, she sends her husband out to invite the entire community for a dinner. The fifteenth century authors report that it concerns the innumerable great saints as well as 196,000 jaṅgamas. Therefore, it is not surprising that Mārayya protests against this unrealistic plan. But his vacana is answered by two vacanas of his wife in which confidence in the unlimited possibilities of pure service is expressed. The compilers relate that Lakkamma is able to discern the wishes of all the saints and to prepare immediately for everybody his favourite dish. The prominent saints express their surprise and admiration; and the chapter concludes with the report that Mārayya and Lakkamma both attain the consubstantial union with the Liṅga.

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[119] *Śūnyasampādane* XII:27.

The fifteenth century writers treated the old vacanas and the legendary material in a remarkable way. They have not tried to reduce the role of Lakkamma; but they depicted her as the superior of her husband. Except for the first ten vacanas, the chapter is focused on the poems of Lakkamma; whilst the vacanas of Mārayya are only included in order to stress the notable utterings of his wife. She is the one who guides and teaches her husband; she has a deeper insight and a greater confidence; and, therefore, she is able not only to impart theoretical knowledge but also to perform miraculous acts of service. The only concession to traditional priority seems to be that, in the end, her husband first attains the ultimate union and she follows him. But that is the only time she does not take the lead.

It is clear that the famous women saints of the twelfth century were not forgotten three centuries later. The compilers of the Śūnyasampādane related episodes from the life stories of female ascetics as well as married women devotees. Even the low-caste Lakkamma is not missed. Several vacanas of these women devotees are included in the great collection and, sometimes, the compilation suggests that their contribution is even more valuable than the poems of their male partners in the discussion. The Śūnyasaṃpādane recognizes that women in the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa could follow their own way to spiritual enlightenment. Of course, this granted a certain independence to women in later ages as well. However, this independence is strictly confined to spiritual matters,[120] and the revolutionary ideals of social equality which were prevalent in the twelfth century are almost absent in the Śūnyasaṃpādane. There are only a few references to the views on equality of men and women; and, mostly, the compilers tend to spiritualize these convictions. Typical is the quotation of one of Basava's vacanas in the seventh chapter of the Śūnyasaṃpādane. This chapter which is devoted to the enlightenment of Basava, contains only one vacana that refers to ideas about male and female. The text is:

Maruḷu tale, huruḷu tale nīne dēvā.
Heṅgūsu gaṇḍugūsu nīne dēvā.
Emmakkana gaṇḍanu nīne dēvā,-
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā,
bhrāntaḷidu bhāva nelegoṇḍittāgi.[121]

You, O Lord, are the foolish head and the wise head.
You, O Lord, are the girl and the boy.
You, O Lord, are my sister's husband,-
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
delusion being conquered
my heart is founded on a rock.

Originally, this vacana was directed to God; and it expressed the insight of the mystic that all dualities are absorbed in the Divine. So it hints at the essential unity of male and female being. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane, however, the poem is put in a dialogue between Basava and Allama, who is called Prabhudēva in the book, and in this way the latter becomes the addressee of the verse: 'dēva' is no longer the divine Lord but the great guru Prabhudēva. A prose insert by the fifteenth century revisor makes clear that the vacana must be interpreted as an enigmatic verse. The foolish head and the wise head stand for Basava's awareness and forgetfulness; the girl and the boy refer to the power (śakti) and the essence of Śiva; and the sister's husband is none other than Allama who has the power over right knowledge. Every possible reference to the radical preaching of the twelfth century has been avoided.

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[120] See R.B. MICHAEL, 'Women of the *Śūnyasaṃpādane*', *JAOS*, Vol. 103, 1983, p. 368. He emphasizes this point but makes a too sharp contradistinction between a 'rather conservative social function' and 'radical religious implications'.

[121] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* VII:11 (BASAVA, 917, slightly different text; cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 307).

Thus, the Śūnyasampādane is clearly a book from a later period in which certain insights of the early vacanakāras were not anymore shared. Social equality of man and woman was not a topic anymore in the fifteenth century. Therefore, part of the old texts had to be ignored or reinterpreted. On the other hand, there was still so much respect for women, that the book does not contain statements and convictions hostile towards women. But, certainly, the zeal of the initial community at Kalyāṇa had disappeared. The revolutionary circumstances of that community had come down to later generations in the stories about the great saints; and, in that way, also the Śūnyasampādane preserved pictures of untraditional sex roles and experimental situations. But the ideas behind those pictures could not be propagated anymore in the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the stories of the female saints have their rightful place in the Śūnyasampādane. The reverence for these women was so great that they are still depicted as self-assured and influential characters. The conviction that women can make their own way of spiritual advancement was not denied in later times; and, at least in religious matters, women enjoyed a favourable position in the Vīraśaiva community. Having such female saints was of no mean importance for the relations between men and women even after several centuries.

The Fifteenth Century - Siddhaliṅgēśvara

In fifteenth century Vīraśaivism, we can witness, however, also another trend. When we read the vacanas of Tōṇṭada Siddhalingēśvara, the influential reorganizer of the movement, we meet with quite different thoughts on the status of women. He wrote a number of vacanas which are outrightly hostile to women. In these poems, women are portrayed as dangerous seducers of men; and the main message seems to be that any association with such individuals should be avoided. The following vacana is an example of his more moderate poems on this subject.

Mōhana moleya muddumogada
bhāvakiyara lallenuḍiyemba nayagitti
ellara hṛdayava kor̤avuttide nōḍā.
Innelliya ar̤uhō Śiva Śivā,
ballatana bar̤udor̤e hōyittukāṇā,
Mahāliṅgaguru Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[122]

Look how the charming knife cleaves everybody's heart:

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[122] SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 106 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 66); 'nayagitti' = 'nayakatti'.

the sweet talk of women
with seductive breasts and pretty faces!
O Śiva, where is wisdom then?
Look, knowledge has become like a dry river,
O Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord!

The author warns his male audience against the risks of contact with women. A woman may have an attractive figure and a charming face; but, with her sweet words, she entices men. In the eyes of the poet, associating with women means to lose one's spiritual knowledge; because wisdom and sensual pleasure cannot go together. He uses two similes to illustrate his point. The first concerns the sweet words of seductive women which he compares to a sword that cleaves one's heart. What seems to be most attractive turns out to be a grave danger: female temptation is a threat to man's existence. The second simile tells what happens to the acquired knowledge of someone who is caught up in the meshes of woman's temptations. His knowledge dries up like a river in summertime and becomes quite useless. Thus, the vacana warns men to keep well away from women.

There are many vacanas in Siddhaliṅgēśvara's work which express his fear of the seductive power of women.[123] Obviously, he is very impressed by that force that makes man 'melting as butter at the sight of fire'.[124] Therefore, he denounces all association with women and in most cases he does not make any distinction between virtuous and loose women or between one's own wife and one's neighbour's wife. Only in two vacanas is he more in line with the moral teaching of Basava warning not to covet another's wife and wealth; but these texts have mainly an allegorical meaning.[125] For the rest, his generalizing admonitions seems to come from quite another sphere than Basava's community. However, Siddhaliṅgēśvara himself appears not to be aware of any deviation from the path of Basava; because, in one vacana, he expressly refers to his view on the status of women.

Heṇṇina rūpu kaṇṇige ramyavāgi tōr̤uvadidu
karaṇaṅgaḷa guṇa kāṇiraṇṇā.
Karaṇada kattaḷeya liṅgada beḷaganuṭṭu kaḷedu
mukkaṇṇanē kaṇṇagippa
Śaraṇabasavaṇṇana pādava tōr̤i badukisayyā,
Mahāliṅgaguru Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[126]

Look, brothers:
showing the female form as pleasant to the eyes
is the nature of the senses.
O Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord,
show me the foot of Basava, the great saint,
who has as his eye the Three-eyed deity,
who dispelled the darkness of the senses
by wearing the light of the liṅga,-
and make me live!

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123. See especially SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 107, 110, 111, 115, 140, 150, 494, 551, and 552.
124. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 111: 'Urige tōr̤eda beṇṇe karaguvante...'.
125. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 291, 404.
126. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 494 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 283).

According to this poem, it is the deceptive function of the senses which makes man experience women as attractive. But the senses do not reveal reality; they reflect sheer illusion. Therefore, the disciple must try to stop the function of his senses; then, he will make the transition from the night of illusion into the dawn of enlightenment. This is a common theme in the vacanas of Siddhaliṅgēśvara. Here, however, it is worked out in a peculiar way by the explicit reference to Basava in combination with the restriction of illusion to sexuality. The poet prays very humbly that he might see the foot of Basava, which is the usual expression for the contact with a great saint or a deity. The qualifications which are added, are very significant. Basava is said to see reality with the eyes of Śiva and, therefore, he is able to overcome the power of illusion (māye). And the essential illusion seems to be the female attraction that is caused by the working of the senses. It is that darkness of illusion that Basava has dispelled by his divine light, according to Siddhaliṅgēśvara. However, the way in which Basava is portrayed here is difficult to harmonize with the data from the twelfth century, and Siddhaliṅgēśvara's appeal to the authority of the founder of Vīraśaivism is not convincing. He could have referred more appropriately to the ascetic writers of the twelfth century like Siddharāma. Some of the latter's ideas appear in his vacanas. Siddhaliṅgēśvara too writes that a devotee who has reached the śaraṇasthala does not need a marital relationship anymore; because he is married to the Liṅga.[127] But his categorical denial of woman's value is certainly not found in the vacanas of Siddharāma.

It becomes even more clear that Siddhaliṅgēśvara moved away from the ideals of Basava and his fellow śaraṇas when we consider some other vacanas in his work. There are four poems in which he expresses in most abusive language his aversion to women and to sexuality.[128] Like the other vacanas about women, they are meant to warn his audience against the enticement of female attraction. Now, however, he does not try anymore to persuade his disciples by reasoning. He tries to evoke abhorrence by his denegrating picture of women and the sensual pleasures with them. The following example will illustrate this sufficiently.

Malavottidare hāḷugēriyalli biḍabēkayyā.
Jalavottidare baccaloḷage biḍabekayyā.
Indriyavottidare yōniyemba baccaloḷage biḍabēkayyā.
Śvānanondu carmava kacci tandu tippeya keṟedu hūḷi,
mattondu nāyi bandu kaccitendu kāydukoṇḍippante
tānucceya hoyiva baccalaguṇḍiya jīvada heṇana
maneya maṟeyallirisikoṇḍu
mattondu bandu kaccittendu kukkanāyante kāydukoṇḍippavaṅge
Śivakṛpe innelliyadō,
Mahāliṅgaguru Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[129]

When the bowels are pressing,
you have to relieve yourself in a ruined street.

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[127] SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 288, 398, cf. SIDDHARĀMA, 1175 (see page 151).

[128] SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 112, 114, 116, and 142.

[129] SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 116 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 69-70).

When your water is pressing,
you have to relieve yourself into the drain.
When your passion is pressing,
you have to relieve yourself into the drain called vagina.
Like a dog that brings a piece of leather in his muzzle
and buries it scratching in a dung-hill,
guarding it when another dog comes and tries to catch it,
so is he, who hides in his house
a living carcass, a drainpipe to pour urine in,
guarding it like a watchdog
when another comes and tries to catch it,
such a man - where could be Śiva's grace for him?
O Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord!

The comparison of sex life with defecating and urinating speaks for itself. The metaphor of the dog with a piece of leather on a dung-hill combines the most unclean animal with the most impure things and is, therefore, highly offensive by Indian standards. The last lines, in which the coarse language comes to a head, rest on the similarity between the words for woman ('heṇ') and for carcass ('heṇa'). It is clear that Siddhaliṅgēśvara does not have any respect for women and uses every possible means to warn against the dangers of female company.

The background of this remarkable attitude can be found in the ascetic tradition. We discovered already a certain affinity with the Vīraśaiva ascetics of the twelfth century like Siddharāma, who were also unfavourably disposed towards several pleasures of life and preferred the spiritual marriage with the Liṅga to the enjoyment of human sexuality. However, there are important differences as well. The twelfth century ascetics chose the way of world renunciation; but they were still intensely connected with the experimental community at Kalyāṇa. Their efforts of renouncement made them critical to sensual pleasures but, nevertheless, they valued the more inner-worldly ascetism of Basava. The devotion of many married men and women prevented them from condemning family life as such. Although they sometimes had difficulties to accept female thinkers and ascetics, as the case of Akka Mahādēvi reveals, they were also impressed by the women's contribution to Vīraśaivism. Three centuries later, the situation had changed considerably. There were no important female leaders anymore and, although women saints from the past were venerated, they were not regarded as examples to imitate. Moreover, a sharp distinction was made between ascetic life and family life. World renunciation had become mostly a male affair and the monks were organized in hierarchical orders. It was Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara who reorganized in this time the order of the virakta monks, who took strict monastic vows including chastity. In this ascetic milieu, much more protected against secular life than in the twelfth century, we have to place the extreme warnings against all possible contact with women. The vacanas of Siddhaliṅgēśvara on this subject were meant to support the new, strict roles which he imposed on the monastic life of his order. In this endeavour, he falls back on an old Hindu tradition of sneering at women, of which a classical author writes that it happened 'in view of the renouncement' ('vairāgyamārgeṇa').[130] For the virakta monks of the fifteenth century, women could only be a threat to their severe practice of renunciation. It is not too surprising, therefore, to find in these circles a depreciation of women which was inconceivable in early Vīraśaivism. Siddhaliṅgēśvara abandoned all earlier theories about the equality of men and women, so that he can conclude:

Gaṇḍaginda heṇḍati modalē huṭṭidarū
ā gaṇḍaginda kir̤iyaḷallade hiriyaḷallavayyā. .....[131]
Although woman was born earlier than man,
she is inferior to man, not superior. .....

Siddhaliṅgēśvara was the first Vīraśaiva author who explicitly articulated this ascetic contempt for women; but he was certainly not the last. Several monks and mendicants followed his example and clearly expressed their fear of women in all kinds of admonitions to avoid contact with those inferior beings. One of them is the anonymous writer who used as his devotional signature 'Sarvajña'; he lived most probably in the sixteenth century. In his ideas about caste, he followed closely Basava, as we have seen in the first chapter; but, with respect to the dignity of women, he followed the tradition of which Siddhaliṅgēśvara was such a clear exponent.

Nambidantirabēku nambade irabēku
imbar̤idu eccar̤irabēku heṅgūsa
nambidava keṭṭa, Sarvajña.[132]
You must seem to be trustful, but you must be distrustful.
Be attentive to know this saying.
He who trusts a girl will be ruined, *O All-knowing Lord!*

This tradition of ascetic poets apparently moved away from one of the most distinctive features of original Vīraśaivism: the new attitude towards women on the basis of equality.

The Fifteenth Century - Concluding Remarks

We discovered two different currents in the devotional literature of fifteenth century Vīraśaivism. On the one hand, there is the tradition which is built upon the writings and convictions of the early Vīraśaiva saints. Its monumental product is the Śūnyasaṃpādane. It contains several stories about the women saints of the first period who were apparently held in high esteem. So, this tradition partly preserved the egalitarian ideals of the community at Kalyāṇa, although the historical and social circumstances had changed considerably. The social impact of these ideals could not be stressed anymore in the new situation; but, at least in the religious domain, Vīraśaiva women were granted a certain independence.

On the other hand, we found the tradition of ascetic writers in Vīra-

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130. VARĀHAMIHIRA, *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* 74:5 (6th century A.D.), quoted by AS. ALTEKAR, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, Delhi, 1973, p. 323.
131. SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 162 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 91).
132. SARVAJÑA, 630 (cf. K.B. PRABHU PRASAD, *Sarvajna*, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 43-44). BASAVARĀJA's edition omits 'keṭṭa', which is obviously wrong.

śaivism, of which Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara is the main exponent. He is characterized by an outrightly hostile attitude towards women. Many of Siddhaliṅgēśvara's vacanas reflect the fear to lose spiritual concentration and power in the contact with women. Consequently, women are depicted as most dangerous and detestable beings; and the ascetic disciples are warned not to associate with women and to discard all feelings of attraction and lust. Vacanas with repulsive judgements about women serve to achieve this aim. The social ideals of the initial phase of Vīraśaivism have been completely abandoned in this tradition.

The two currents in fifteenth century Vīraśaivism demonstrate how difficult it is to adapt the ideals of an experimental community of bygone days to the values of a stabilized society. Under the Vijayanagara kings, there was ample opportunity to reflect the philosophical and mythological traditions of previous centuries, as is testified by the great literary production of that age.[133] However, the social ideals of the movement were hardly applicable under the changed circumstances. The compilers of the Śūnyasampādane tried to retain at least some of the old ideals with respect to man-woman relations; but Siddhaliṅgēśvara bluntly rejects the favourable position of women and joins in the general ascetic aversion to women. Within three centuries, Vīraśaivism had lost its egalitarian outlook under the influence of traditional values. But the women in the community could still appeal to a living tradition of female spirituality. The great women saints were revered highly and, although attacked by ascetic writers, women could still enjoy some independence. With regard to the position of women, Basava's heritage was not forgotten.

The Colonial Period - Women and Religion

The ethnographic material from the nineteenth and twentieth century is again very elucidating. Civil servants and missionaries described in detail the life of the Liṅgāyatas, including the position of women in their community.

First of all, we shall consider the accounts about the status of women in religious matters. We have seen that, in the fifteenth century, Vīraśaiva women enjoyed a certain independence in the domain of religion. In the colonial period, we find several indications that women were still granted, to some extent, their own spirituality and rituals. The most concrete sign of this is the wearing of the personal liṅga (iṣṭaliṅga) by women. Already at the end of the eighteenth century, Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo described the sect of the 'pandàrangiàdi', in which both men and women wore the liṅga, hung on a string around the neck or the arm.[134] The Pāṇḍuraṅgas are Tamil Liṅgāyatas who are, on the whole, characterized by rather lax conduct with respect to religious

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133. See: Edward P. RICE, *A History of Kanarese Literature*, Calcutta / London, 1921, pp. 64-74.

134. 'Haec [sc. liṅga] eadem ex brachio aut collo portant appensa viri feminaeque Indicae sectae pandaricae, *pandàrangiàdi* dictae', PAULLINUS a Sancto Bartholomaeo, *Systema brahmanicum liturgicum mythologicum civile*, Roma, 1791, p. 31.

prescripts.[135] It is remarkable that those Lingāyatas who did not have a high regard for Basava preserved this aspect of the Kalyāṇa revolution. For the Kannaḍa-speaking countries, we have to rely mainly on records from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the present century. The District Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency mentions explicitly the custom of liṅga-wearing by women. In the volume on Bijapur District, the observation is made that the position of Liṅgāyata women does not differ very much from that of Brāhmaṇa women. But, immediately is added that the difference is the wearing of the iṣṭaliṅga by the Liṅgāyata woman; whilst the Brāhmaṇa woman was not entitled to wear the sacred thread.[136] The Vīraśaiva women not only wore the liṅga; they also worshipped it. The volume on Kolhapur District gives a detailed account of the daily worshipping of the iṣṭaliṅga. The worshippers used to have a bath, put on special clothes, and rub holy ash on their brows and sometimes on other parts of their body as well. Then, the utensils for worship were taken from the cane basket in which they were usually kept. A white blanket was used to sit on; several sacred bead strings (rudrākṣa) were hung round neck, wrists, ears, and arms, and a small one round the liṅga. Some small pots were put down which contained the offerings, flowers, rice, and suchlike. The act of worship itself was the same as in the case of the household gods who were also present in the houses of the Liṅgāyata community. It consisted of bathing, wiping, applying ashes and flowers, burning incense, waving the lamp, and offering rice. Worshipping was the same for men and women; the only exception being that women did not recite the holy texts.[137] This exception is a remarkable sign of the influence of orthodox Hinduism on the rituals of the Vīraśaivas. However, so much was preserved of the heritage of Basava that women could have their own domestic worship on a par with men.

The accounts from the first decades of the twentieth century confirm these ritual rights of women in the Liṅgāyata community. The authoritative study of Edgar Thurston mentions that Liṅgāyata men and women both used the sacred ashes (vibhūti).[138] This is the more remarkable since his article about the Liṅgāyatas is mainly based on information supplied by R.C.C. Carr, a civil servant who collected data about Vīraśaivism in the ultra-orthodox circles connected with the monastery at Ujjaini. The article also reports that, according to some informants, the initiation ceremony of dīkṣe was compulsory for all children of eight years old: both boys and girls. Apparently, Thurston had some doubts about the dependability of this statement: for he adds that it did not appear to him that the dīkṣe was universal in the case of women, nor in the case of male non-Jaṅgamas.[139] He is certainly right is his doubts;

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[135] See Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], s.v. Pandāram.

[136] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 229.

[137] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, Bombay, 1886, pp. 127-128.

[138] THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, [1909], Vol. IV, pp. 256-257.

[139] THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, [1909], Vol. IV, p. 272.

because there is no evidence at all that dīkṣe was given to girls on a large scale. But, apparently, the Liṅgāyata informants were still well aware of the rights which were originally granted to women in their community. Actually, there was a certain case in which dīkṣe was given as a rule to a girl. But precisely that case is, in another respect, a proof how far the Liṅgāyata community went astray from the egalitarian ideals of the twelfth century. If a girl was to be married to a man of a higher Liṅgāyata subcaste (the reverse was not possible at all), she was given an initiation in order to admit her into her new caste. This dikṣe was considered to be so strong that no one who underwent it could ever eat again with former relatives.[140] Of course, this initiation must not be confused with the rite normally undergone by Jaṅgamas in order to obtain the priestly qualification. The latter form of dīkṣe, often called aytana, was restricted to boys.[141]

The accounts about the rituals in this period provide evidence for the survival of a certain part of the twelfth century Vīraśaiva ideals. In ritual matters, women enjoyed still some equal rights with men. However, the most surprising feature of religious participation of women in the twelfth century was their teaching and vacana composing. Were there in the colonial period also women who played the role of a guru or wrote religious texts? It is rather difficult to give a definite answer to this question; because contemporary authors gave different statements, according to their degree of sympathy for Vīraśaivism. C.P. Brown remarked, as early as 1840, about the Liṅgāyata community: 'A woman of piety is just as fit as a man to confer instruction in the creed'.[142] But Brown was strongly impressed by the ideals of Vīraśaivism as outlined to him by his Jaṅgama informants. He often compared the noble moral ideas with his own Christian tradition; and he was inclined to take for granted every positive report on Liṅgāyata customs. Certainly, it was told to him that pious women could teach religion; but it remains unclear whether this was mere theory or also practice. R.C. Artal, who was a Liṅgāyata himself, wrote in 1909 that there were female saints among the Vīraśaivas 'even now' who were called 'śaraṇammanavaru'. Some of them were said to have been well-versed in the philosophy of śaktiviśiṣṭādvaita. Unfortunately, the author did not give any names of these comtemporary women saints but instead enumerated some female teachers from classical Hindu literature.[143] This does not contribute to the reliability of his account; but, on the other hand, it neither proves that there were no such female teachers at all. There are also some interesting observations by the authors of the Bombay Gazetteer. In the volumes on Kolhapur District and Bijapur District, which discuss the Liṅgāyatas at length, it is stated that there are no female teachers of religion in the Vīraśaiva community.[144] The Bijapur volume adds with some cynicism that the only Liṅgāyata women who lead a religious life are the basavis: the religious serving-girls and prostitutes. The problem with the Gazetteer reports is, however, that they provide only information about a limited area. The investigators at Bijapur and Kolhapur did not find any female Liṅgāyata teachers in their districts and they did not discover any religious specialization for women other than sacral prostitution. But their reports cover only a small, specific part of the country: both districts being situated in the extreme northern part of the Kannaḍa-speaking territories. It is quite imaginable that the situation in the southern or eastern districts was different. The fact that the Gazetteer volumes of those districts do not give any information about female gurus is insignificant; because the various district reports have different interests and, in several volumes, there is hardly any attention for the position of women. We must conclude that the tradition of female guruship in Vīraśaivism was still known in the colonial period; but, most probably, it was only honoured in some exceptional cases. Widely known female teachers, as there were in the initial period, are certainly not found in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

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[140] R.E. ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, p. 359.

[141] ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1922, p. 357.

[142] C.P. BROWN, 'On the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 147.

[143] R.C. ARTAL, 'A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith', *The Journal of the Anthrop. Soc. of Bombay*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1909, p. 180.

The Colonial Period - Pollution versus Purity

The texts from the twelfth century revealed a remarkable resistance to the classical conceptions of pollution and purity. Most Vīraśaiva saints rejected all restrictions caused by the 'five pollutions' (pañcasūtaka): caste, childbirth, menstruation, death, and spittle. Especially women took advantage of these reforms, since two of the five pollutions concerned women exclusively. In particular the restrictions relating to menstruation affected women's daily life substantially. As a consequence, the new ideas of the Vīraśaiva leaders about purity meant a great amelioration of the position of women in the community. The saints declared that wearing the liṅga on the body meant to be pure in all circumstances; because the power of the liṅga could not be affected by any defilement. The standard formulation of this belief was the Sanskrit saying

Liṅgadhārī sadā śuddho.
The liṅga-wearer is always pure.

We already find this sentence in the earliest philosophical book of Vīraśaivism, the thirteenth century Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi.[145] It is repeated in the very authoritative treatise about the theory and practice of liṅga-wearing: the Liṅgadhāraṇacandrikā of the seventeenth century.[146] The notion of the purifying power of the liṅga reached the nineteenth century through the Sanskrit books, which were held in high esteem after the vacana literature had faded into the background. Now, we shall regard the effect of this typical Vīraśaiva belief during the colonial period.

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[144] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, 1884, p. 229; Volume XXIV: *Kolhápur*, 1886, p. 120.

[145] *Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi* I:97, quoted by M.R. SAKHARE, *History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion*, Dharwad, 1978, p. 398. The whole stanza reads:

Liṅgadhārī sadā śuddho nijaliṅgaṃ manoharam
arcayedgaṃdhapuṣpādyaiḥ karapiṭhe samāhitaḥ.
The wearer of a liṅga, being always pure, should adore his beautiful liṅga
with perfume and flowers, placing it on the hand.

[146] NANDIKĒŚVARA, *Liṅgadhāraṇacandrikā*, ed. M.R. Sakhara, Thalakwadi, 1942, pp. S18, E24.

There are many sources, even in the early nineteenth century, which provide information about the conduct of Liṅgāyata women concerning purity. Apparently, it was a conspicuous phenomenon, which attracted the attention of most of the European travellers. The first author who must be quoted is the French missionary the Abbé Dubois. He made his observations of religion and customs in Southern India in the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first twenty years of the nineteenth century. In his famous book, Dubois described with apparent amazement the deviant behaviour of the Liṅgāyatas with regard to pollution and purity. He stated that the Liṅgāyatas did not recognize the laws relating to defilement; and, in particular, he mentioned the rules with regard to menstruation and to death and funerals. He reported that this indifference to such customs had given rise to a proverb among the Hindus which says: 'There is no river for a Lingayat', explained by the Abbé as: 'meaning that the members of this sect do not recognize, at all events on many occasions, the virtues and merits of ablutions'.[147] It is obvious that the sympathy of the author is not on the side of the Liṅgāyatas. He reported that the women in this community were not considered to be unclean during menstruation and after childbirth, and that they were even allowed in those periods to enter every room of the house: meaning in particular the kitchen and the room where the idols were kept. He was not impressed by the custom of Liṅgāyata women to clean themselves ritually, instead of a bath, by smearing sacred ash on the forehead. This custom of bhasmasnāna was especially repellent in his eyes: 'In this way a precautionary measure most beneficial to health in this hot country becomes perverted by superstition'.[148] However, it is not only concern for hygiene that made the Abbé critical of the Liṅgāyatas. Brown remarked already in 1840 that the indignation of Dubois was caused by his confidence in his Brāhmaṇa informants who influenced him strongly with their condemnation of Liṅgāyata customs regarding women. 'He omits', adds Brown as a definite argument, 'that in these very respects Christians are equally reviled by Bramins'.[149] However, we owe to the Abbé Dubois the first reliable description of what the Liṅgāyata community believed about women's pollution. And the contempt, which is obvious in his report, only strengthens the evidence that Liṅgāyata women showed a different behaviour, compared with the Brāhmaṇa standard.

After Dubois, many authors in several parts of the country made similar observations about the liberal views of the Vīraśaivas on female purity and pollution. Steele observed in 1826 in Poona, the northernmost town with a Liṅgāyata community, that the Liṅgāyatas knew hardly any ritual for the occasion of a girl's reaching puberty; whilst most twice-born castes performed elaborate rituals on this occasion. Among the Liṅgāyatas, the girl and her husband had to take a bath; and their parents exchanged presents and put on a feast.[150] So the special occasion of the first menstruation was marked by a modest ritual. Besides, most of the Liṅgāyata women in Poona were not under the obligation of seclusion or other restrictions during menstruation or after childbirth; but some followed the orthodox rules of the Brāhmaṇas.[151] This account shows the ambivalence of a small Liṅgāyata community in a diaspora setting: on the one hand, the liberal ideals were still practised but, on the other hand, we can see the influence of the strict behaviour of the dominant castes. It is interesting to compare Steele's observations with the reports of the District Gazetteer at the end of the nineteenth century. Then, the Jaṅgamas of Poona followed the Brāhmaṇa rules concerning menstruation: consequently, the women of this caste had to sit apart for three days every month.[152] The author of the Gazetteer notes the difference with the Jaṅgamas in Bijapur, the nearest town with a strong Liṅgāyata community, where no such drastic restrictions are said to be found. He concludes rightly that the religious peculiarities of the Jaṅgamas seemed to recede in those regions where the Brāhmaṇa rules were the standard for the majority of the population.

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[147] J.A. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Delhi, 1985, [manuscript 1821], p. 116.

[148] DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, [1821], p. 181, see also p. 190.

[149] C.P. BROWN, 'On the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 146.

However, in the parts of the Kannaḍa-speaking countries where the Liṅgāyatas held a strong position, we do not find everywhere the same attitude towards female purity and pollution. The several Gazetteer accounts indicate a regional diversity in this respect at the end of the nineteenth century. The Gazetteer of the Bijapur District states that, generally, the feeling about impurity was stronger in the north than in the south. In the southern part of the Kannaḍa-speaking country, around Mysore, menstruation is said to have been regarded as not causing any impurity; but, in the villages of Bijapur District, the effect of the orthodox purity rules was also felt among Liṅgāyatas. In the northern part of this district, seclusion of menstruating women occurred, albeit in a very moderate form: in some families, the woman sat apart on the first day of her menstruation. In other families, the woman had to bathe and to apply sacred ash on her forehead on that day, while she was not allowed to touch the household gods during her period. The fact that the minimal cleansing with ash is definitely below the standard of the orthodox Hindu surroundings, appears from a Marāṭhī proverb, which says: 'The Liṅgāyata woman puts on ashes and is pure'.[153] The ambivalence of Liṅgāyata culture in this northern district is indicated by the interesting detail that menstruating women were forbidden to touch the household gods. Of course, Liṅgāyatas were supposed not to have any household deities: their personal liṅga being the only tolerable object of veneration. But in many places, especially where they formed a minority, Liṅgāyatas introduced the same household worship as their neighbours. And installing household gods meant also taking over the purity rules that were connected with such worship.

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[150] Arthur STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, Delhi, 1986 [first ed. 1826], p. 356.

[151] STEELE, *The Hindu Castes; Their Law, Religion and Customa*, [1826], p. 100.

[152] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XVIII, Part I: *Poona*, Bombay, 1885, p. 455.

[153] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 236. The text of the Marāṭhī proverb is given as: 'Lingáyatáchi báyko lávli rákh áni jháli pákh'.

Generally, we find in the northern districts a certain awareness of impurity connected with menstruation and childbirth, sometimes not very different from the meticulousness of the Brāhmaṇas.[154] But, for Liṅgāyatas, it was always much easier to re-establish the state of purity; because they never developed elaborate cleansing rituals. Even on the occasion of a girl's reaching puberty, there was only a modest ritual which did not stress the impurity of the event.[155] And, in the southern regions, the situation regarding the ritual cleanness of women was even more liberal. In the Kanara District (present Uttara Kannada), there were no traces of impurity connected with childbirth or menstruation.[156]

There were not only regional differences with regard to purity but differences between the various castes in the Liṅgāyata community as well. We noticed already that, in the diaspora situation of Poona, the high priestly caste of Jaṅgamas was more scrupulous about purity than other Liṅgāyatas. But the reverse could also occur: in Dharwar District, it was the fairly low Liṅgāyata caste of Paṭṭasāle which had rather strict rules regarding the purity of women. Among these silk-weavers, a woman was considered to be impure for five days after childbirth. A menstruating woman was unclean until she had taken a bath; and, even after that, she was not allowed to prepare meals or to enter the idol room.[157] Paṭṭasāles are classified as Affiliated Liṅgāyatas; and, most probably, they preserved those rules from the time before their conversion to Vīraśaivism. They took over the philosophy and the rituals of the Liṅgāyatas; but giving up every notion of impurity was too much. Consequently, the rather odd situation occurred in this district that the staunch True Liṅgāyatas had a more liberal attitude towards female purity than the lower castes; whereas, in Hinduism, lower castes are normally less inclined to observe strict purity rules than higher castes.

The data from the first half of the twentieth century do not add very much to the information gathered so far. Enthoven confirms that ritual impurity as a result of menstruation or childbirth was observed especially in the districts belonging to Bombay Presidency; whilst, in the south, menstruation was not considered to cause pollution.[158] Thurston stated even more categorically that Liṅgāyatas did not observe any cleansing rituals during menstrual periods; as, in their opinion, no pollution is attached to it. Only on the occasion of the first menstruation was a simple ritual performed in which the girl took an oil bath, received gifts, and a lamp was ceremonially waved round her head (ārati). This ritual lasted only one day, except in the case of some rich families who extended it to more days. The author states that this custom was 'evidently copied from other castes'.[159] The same ritual for the occasion of attaining puberty was described by Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer in their comprehensive study of the Mysore tribes and castes. It is remarkable that in their description nothing is found of the presumed indifference towards pollution in the regions round Mysore. On the contrary, it is stressed that the girl was kept in seclusion for three days and was not allowed to enter the idol room or the kitchen before the ritual was completed. The only exception was that she could worship her personal liṅga as usual.[160] Again, we can witness the ambivalence of Liṅgāyata ritual. On the one hand, the pure Vīraśaiva belief that the liṅga cannot be defiled is retained but, on the other hand, the customs of the orthodox Hindu environment were adopted especially with regard to the removing of pollution.

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[154] See e.g.: *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, Bombay, 1886, p. 120; and: Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, 1884, p. 229.

[155] See e.g.: *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 114.

[156] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XV, Part I: *Kánara*, Bombay, 1883, p. 178.

[157] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, 1884, p. 105.

[158] R.E. ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, p. 363. It remains, however, unclear whether the author made any new observations by himself; because his account on this point is almost literally quoted from the *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, 1884, p. 236.

The Colonial Period - Marriage

The difference between old theory and new practice is especially notable with regard to the regulations of marriage. Several nineteenth century authors were struck by the fact that Liṅgāyatas practised infant marriage. Most probably, their informants themselves had difficulties to combine the teachings of the early vacanakāras about the dignity of women with the practice of giving young girls in marriage to men whom they had never even seen. In some publications it is stated that Liṅgāyata practice is not in accordance with Basava's instruction. He is said to have opposed infant marriage and to have given girls the right to choose their future husband.[161] In the vacanas of Basava, we do not find information on this subject; but it could well be imagined that the Vīraśaiva theory goes back to Basava himself. But now we shall have a look at the practice.

An interesting account of this topic is found in Brown's article of 1840. He reported that the wedding among the Liṅgāyatas often took place after the bride was grown up, although the Ārādhyas practised infant marriage like their fellow Brāhmaṇas. Marriage is said to be not imperative but voluntary. If the marriage remained childless, the man was permitted to take a second wife, but not without the consent of his first wife.[162] Unfortunately, the author displayed an uncritical attitude towards his Jaṅgama informants; and so it is difficult to judge the reliability of his statements. Particularly the practice of adult marriage

[159] Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, pp. 272-273.

[160] H.V. NANJUNDAYYA, L.K. ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, Mysore, 1931, p. 98.

[161] See e.g. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 105; Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, Bombay, 1886, p. 120.

[162] C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 147.

would be very remarkable; because later reports never mention it. But it is not impossible that in Madras, where Brown collected his data, Liṅgāyatas distinguished themselves by a marriage practice that was more in accordance with the original Vīraśaiva ideals.

However, the information collected half a century later in the homeland of Vīraśaivism gives another picture. The Gazetteer of the Kolhapur District reported unambiguously that Liṅgāyata girls were married when they were about ten years old, and that they did not have anything to say about the choice of a husband.[163] In the volume on Dharwar District of the Gazetteer, however, some differentiations were made. It was confirmed that in Kolhapur District, as well as in the more northern district of Satara, the rule of child marriage was strictly observed; but the situation in the districts of Bijapur and Dharwar was said to be different. Here, early marriage was the practice but such a child marriage was not held binding. The author suggested that, formerly, adult marriage was practised among the Dharwar Liṅgāyatas. The custom that bride and bridegroom, even when they were very young, spent the first night after the wedding together, would point to this previous practice. And he remarked that, in Mysore, adult marriage was still practised by the Liṅgāyata community. In Dharwar, adult marriage was only found in castes which are classified as Half-Liṅgāyatas, mostly influenced to a great extent by low-caste customs.[164]

Again, we find a striking difference between the northern and the southern regions. In the northernmost town with a Liṅgāyata community, Poona, child marriage was already introduced and made compulsory in the early nineteenth century: as early as in 1826, there was the rule that girls who married after attaining puberty had to do penance.[165] Going south, we see a similar situation in the districts of Satara and Kolhapur: also heavily dominated by the Brāhmaṇa culture of the Marāṭis. In the districts of Bijapur and Dharwar, by tradition more under the influence of Liṅgāyata culture, the situation was different: the memory of the former custom of adult marriage was still alive. And, more to the south, in the regions round Mysore, we still find adult marriage in this period. Evidence for this practice can be found in the extensive report of the journey made by Buchanan in 1800. He mentioned the possibility of adult marriage in his reports on some Liṅgāyata castes, although the caste of Baṇajiga did not allow this practice.[166] Buchanan's information on the different Liṅgāyata castes is not too accurate; but, obviously, adult marriage was practised in a part of the Liṅgāyata community in Mysore. Later reports show that also in Mysore child marriage became the rule; but the memory of the previous practice of adult marriage could still be found. The Mysore Gazetteer of 1927 remarked that marriage was contracted at child age 'among the generality of the Lingayat sections', thus including the practice of later marriage.[167] And the authoritative study of Nanjundayya and Ananthakrishna Iyer judged that 'the true Lingāyats marry their daughters as infants', which likewise indicates that this custom was not general.[168] This development from adult marriage to child marriage is a pure example of sanskritization: the process by which non-Brāhmaṇa castes gradually adopt the Brāhmaṇa rules in order to increase their prestige.[169] The original liberal attitude of the Liṅgāyata community regarding the age of marriage could not persist in a society which was dominated by Brāhmaṇa culture. In the northern regions, where the Brāhmaṇa influence was strongest, this practice was given up first. And, in later times, the Liṅgāyatas had to accustom themselves to the dominant culture even in the southern regions. Their wish to hold a high position in society had to result in the abandonment of a custom which gave rise to indignation in the orthodox sections of society.

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[163] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, 1886, p. 126.

[164] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, 1884, pp. 102, 106.

[165] Arthur STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, Delhi, 1986 [first ed. 1826], p. 348.

[166] Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, pp. 237-238, Vol. II, pp. 145, 154, 241.

However, Brāhmaṇa customs regarding widowhood were not adopted. In the Brāhmaṇa caste, a woman lost almost all her rights when her husband died. She was despised as extremely inauspicious; and so she could not participate in social life anymore. Her head was clean shaven and she was not allowed to wear a blouse or any ornaments. Sometimes, she was even expected to end her life on her husband's funeral pyre (sati). A remarriage was absolutely impossible for Brāhmaṇa widows. On the contrary, most Liṅgāyata castes have always permitted the remarriage of widows, as is amply testified by the ethnographers of the colonial period. According to the Indian Law Reports, it was an immemorial custom that Liṅgāyata widows remarried.[170] It was claimed that this custom went back to Basava himself.[171] The vacanas of Basava give scarcely any indication of this assumption; but, definitely, it is in agreement with his moral teachings.[172] Not all sections within the Liṅgāyata community permitted the marriage of widows; but generally it was allowed. In the early nineteenth century, it seems to have been permitted in most True Liṅgāyata castes. In Poona, widows from the Jaṅgama caste could even contract a second marriage, albeit with a simple ceremony and only after paying a fee to a religious authority.[173] In the southern regions, in the Princely State of Mysore, the situation was different in the various castes. Buchanan mentioned some Liṅgāyata castes which allowed widow remarriage and some others which definitely opposed it. Among the opponents are the True Liṅgāyata caste of Baṇajiga, but also some castes that could be classified as Affiliated Liṅgāyatas or Half-Liṅgāyatas. The latter sometimes retained from their pre-Vīraśaiva period the custom of sati; and, since they introduced the Liṅgāyata practice of burying instead of cremating, they are said to have buried alive their widows.[174] Brown mentioned as a general rule that remarriage was possible; and he remarks that widows were treated 'with every sort of kindness and respect'.[175] This will be a too rosy picture: for he reported also that, in most Liṅgāyata castes, widows were not allowed to wear blouse and ornaments, although their head was not shaven.

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[167] *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, Bangalore, 1927, p. 233; the exception of the Baṇajiga caste which strictly adhered to child marriage, is also mentioned: p. 213.

[168] H.V. NANJUNDAYYA, L.K. ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, Mysore, 1931, p. 92.

[169] The term 'sanskritization' was created by M.N. SRINIVAS in his study on *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, Bombay, 1978 [first ed. 1952], p. 30. See especially his *Caste in Modern India*, Bombay, 1985, pp. 42-62, and *Social Change in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 1-45.

[170] Quoted by Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, p. 279.

[171] THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Vol. IV, p. 278: 'The remarriage of widows was one of the points on which Basava insisted, and was probably one of the biggest bones of contention with the Brāhmans.' This sentence is literally taken over by R.E. ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, p. 363, and by NANJUNDAYYA, ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, p. 100. William McCORMACK is very sceptical about the Liṅgāyata claim that widow marriage is a typical feature of their tradition: 'Lingayats as a Sect', *The Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Inst. of Gr.Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 93, 1963, p. 66. According to him, there is no evidence 'apart from an early decision from the Madras court [1884]'; but from our data, it appears clearly that the custom was well-known in the nineteenth century.

These observations are confirmed by later ethnographic publications. The District Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency provides valuable information about the situation at the end of the nineteenth century. It is clear that the Liṅgāyata widow was still in a much better position than the Brāhmaṇa widow. The practice of shaving a widow's head was not known in the Liṅgāyata community; and the widow was permitted to wear a blouse and most ornaments. The situation regarding remarriage differred. In Kolhapur District, it was not allowed in several higher Liṅgāyata castes; in Bijapur District, only the Jaṅgamas forbade it; and, in Dharwar District, it was generally allowed. But the marriage of a widow was not celebrated with the same solemnity as a normal marriage. In Bijapur District, it was a very low-ranked Jaṅgama, the Ganācāri, who performed the marriage; because the regular Jaṅgama considered it to be beneath his station.[176] The resistance against widow marriage, so deeply rooted in Hindu society, remained noticeable in the Liṅgāyata community. The sources from the first half of the twentieth century agree that mostly widow marrriages were possible; but there were still exceptions: the

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[172] The only text that possibly points to a custom of widow remarriage is BASAVA 201, which says about wealth (which must not be kept for oneself): 'If you say that it is for your wife: your wife has another thing in mind; when your body falls down, she certainly joins another man and gives it away'.

[173] STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, [1826], pp. 99, 365.

[174] BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, 1807, Vol. I, pp. 237, 255, 352, 419, Vol. II, pp. 145, 154, 241. The castes which are said to bury their widows are 'Samay Shalay' (Samasāle) and 'Bheri who wear the Linga' (liṅgadhāri Nagarta).

[175] BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', 1840, p. 147.

[176] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, 1884, p. 106; Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, 1884, pp. 221, 229; Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, 1886, p. 131.

Baṇajigas in Mysore did not practise it; and conservative religious authorities, as the gurus of the Ujjaini monastery, disregarded it and stated that it was for Jaṅgamas even forbidden.[177]

The Colonial Period - Adultery and Prostitution

In the vacanas of the twelfth century, we came across repeated warnings against adultery. The saints in Kalyāṇa preached a strict sexual morality and urged their male followers to give up any desire for other women. And, of course, infidelity was considered to be a cardinal sin for married women among the devotees. Nevertheless, there were prostitutes and concubines in the community of Kalyāṇa: even among married women, as we have seen. But marital faithfulness certainly remained an undisputed commandment.

Of course, it is very difficult to obtain an impression of the moral behaviour among the Liṅgāyatas throughout the course of history. We can only make a few cautious and tentative remarks. There are some scattered observations in the ethnographic material which demand our attention. Buchanan was informed during his trip in 1800 that amongst the Baṇajigas in the Mysore country, adultery was very rare, although he added: 'that is to say, among the women; for among the people of this country the term is never applied to the infidelity of married men'.[178] On the other hand, for some other Liṅgāyata castes, the author gave rather detailed information about the punishments of adulterous women, which suggests that infidelity was not exceptional.[179] At least, it appears that the Liṅgāyata community needed sanctions in order to correct immoral behaviour. Severe sanctions were imposed on incest with one's mother or an affair with the wife of a guru, as reported in Poona by Steele.[180] Since the guru was the spiritual father of his followers, his wife had to be treated with the same reverence as due to one's mother. However, this protection of the jaṅgama's family has an ironic aspect; because the jaṅgamas themselves had not a very good reputation as far as sexual morality is concerned. Generally, the higher jaṅgamas, who had to lead a celibate life, had relationships with prostitutes who were especially selected by the monastery for this purpose.[181] There were even rumours that travelling jaṅgamas had erotic contacts with the wives of the devotees who gave them lodging. Dubois described with uncon-

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177. See THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, 1909, Vol. IV, pp. 252, 278-279; ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1922, p. 363; *Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. I, 1927, p. 213; NANJUNDAYYA, ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, 1931, p. 100.
178. Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, p. 238.
179. BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, 1807, Vol. II, pp. 145, 154. These castes are 'Siv' Achárya Woculiga' (Śivācārya Okkaliga) and 'Heganigaru' (Heggāṇiga).
180. Arthur STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, Delhi, 1986 [first ed. 1826], p. 147.
181. J.A. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, Delhi, 1985 [manuscript 1821], p. 133; STEELE, *The Hindu Castes, Their Law, Religion and Customs*, [1826], p. 100; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XIX: *Sátára*, Bombay, 1885, p. 119.

cealed contempt how jaṅgamas on their travels stayed at the houses of devotees, while all the male inmates had to leave the house out of respect for the revered guest who had in that way the place to himself with the women to serve him. The author added that, according to scandal-mongers, the jaṅgamas always took care to choose a house where the women were young.[182] However, we should not forget what Brown rightly remarked about the reports of Dubois: that the Abbé wrote evidently under the influence of Brāhmaṇas who reviled the Liṅgāyatas as they did the Christians.[183] On the other hand, Brown was certainly impressed too much by the high morals of the Liṅgāyata community. This becomes apparent in his attempt to minimalize the role of prostitution in the community. He stated as 'the received opinion' that Liṅgāyatas were completely forbidden to have intercourse with prostitutes. The repeated allusions to prostitution in the Vīraśaiva purāṇa literature should be explained by the 'theory' that Basava permitted some unmarried men under his followers to have intercourse with courtesans who belonged to the movement. He added that, in the present age, this situation did not occur anymore; but he had to admit that there were in the western districts (present Karnataka) prostitutes who were called 'Basvinis' and were 'said to be thus devoted by their parents, on their lives being in danger through illness in infancy'. Some of these would be Liṅgāyatas and form thus proof that the purity of the community was not so perfect as its devotees asserted.[184]

Actually, the institution of basavi, dedicated girls in the Liṅgāyata community, was not a marginal phenomenon in the nineteenth century. But it is not easy to get a clear insight into the number and situation of the prostitutes. Very illustrating is Enthoven's observation that, according to official census data, the class of Liṅgāyata prostitutes was disappearing at the end of the century: in 1884, there were about 2000 Basavis in Dharwar District alone; whilst the census of 1901 counted for the whole of Bombay Presidency not more than seven members of the Basavi class: one male and six females! Enthoven suggested that, in 1901, the basavis claimed another caste identity.[185] This is certainly right, for it is impossible that a fairly numerous caste almost died out in less than twenty years. The reason for this shift can easily be guessed. Before the propagation of Western values, it was a fairly honourable position to be a basavi, as is testified by many observations in the nineteenth century.[186] A small but significant example is that basavis had an important role in the Liṅgāyata wedding ceremony; because they were in an ever auspicious state: not running the risk of

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182. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, [1821], p. 117.
183. C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 146.
184. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', 1840, p. 160.
185. R.E ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, Bombay, 1922, p. 355.
186. See e.g. DUBOIS, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, [1821], p. 133; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 106.

becoming a widow![187] But at the end of the century, the situation had changed considerably. New values were propagated by European missionaries and civil servants, and soon adopted by Hindu reformers. The social prestige of the basavis gradually decreased; and for many of them, another caste identity was rather attractive.

The term basavi is not always used in the strict sense of dedicated women within the Liṅgāyata community. Sometimes non-Liṅgāyata women are called basavi as well; then the word functions as a synonym for dēvadāsi: the general term for women who are dedicated to a godhead or a temple.[188] On the other hand, not all these women in the Liṅgāyata community are called basavis. There was also a Liṅgāyata caste of 'courtesans' called Saibs, who had their origin in the regions round Gulbarga.[189] They are said to have recruited girls from every Hindu caste except the untouchables. The strictly Liṅgāyata basavis, as they were found for example in Dharwar District, recruited girls mostly from castes which can be classified as Affiliated Liṅgāyatas. Especially in the Calavādi caste, it was customary to let girls become basavis. Although they acted as prostitutes, they enjoyed a fairly good position in society. They were entitled to all aṣṭāvaraṇa rites; and, thus, they can be regarded as a caste of Affiliated Liṅgāyatas. In accordance with this status, they distinguished themselves from the lower castes, such as Half-Liṅgāyatas, by abstaining from meat and liquor.[190] Obviously, there was no moral objection against prostitution in the nineteenth century Liṅgāyata community. But the status of the basavis declined when the influence of Western values increased: in particular of the British Victorian civilization.

The Colonial Period - Women in the Society

In the founding period, women devotees played an important public role in the Vīraśaiva movement. There seem to have been scarcely any impediments for women to speak in public and to share in the discussions of men. This was quite contrary to the prevailing views about the position of women; therefore, it is not surprising that such controversial values did not persist. It is interesting, though not easy, to investigate whether something of this initial liberality has remained in later ages.

The data from the nineteenth century provide at least one proof that Liṅgāyata women still enjoyed rather more freedom than women in orthodox Hindu circles. At that time, the custom of pardā was widespread among the higher strata in society: women were secluded in their own quarters and had to veil themselves in public. Originally an Islamic prescript, it was adopted by many high caste Hindus as a symbol of

187. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, 1884, p. 192; Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IIp. 139. Cf. the title of Saskia KERSENBOOM's study on Tamil dēvadāsis *Nityasumaṅgalī* ('ever-auspicious woman').

188. See THURSTON, RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, [1909], s.v. Dēva-dāsi.

189. ENTHOVEN, *The Tribes and Castes of Bombay*, Vol. II, 1922, p. 376.

190. *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, 1884, pp. 186, 192.

social prestige. In the Liṅgāyata community, however, there was no seclusion of any kind.[191] The foreign custom of pardā was too inconsistent with the old ideals of Vīraśaivism; and it never became part of the Liṅgāyata culture. On the other hand, this point should not be stressed too much, since it is only one aspect of the position of women and, otherwise, Liṅgāyatas were not particularly liberal in their views on women. Brown was certainly too enthousiastic when he praised the Liṅgāyatas for their 'considerate and decent behaviour toward the female sex', as a 'very pleasing peculiarity which entirely divides them from other classes'.[192] Brown relied on sacred books, which give only the theory of religion, and on the information from insiders who seem to be not very objective concerning the practice of their religion. It is remarkable that the authors of the Bombay Gazetteer did not notice much difference between the position of a Liṅgāyata and a Brāhmaṇa woman.[193] The ideals of Vīraśaivism with regard to the position of women were not forgotten. The discussions in several volumes of the Gazetteer, as well as the information obtained by Brown, reveal that the Liṅgāyatas were well aware of the fact that their religious tradition proclaimed the equality of men and women. The pressure of the dominant Brāhmaṇa culture, however, made it impossible for the Liṅgāyatas to put those ideals into practice.

This might be an explanation for the popularity of the few exceptions in Liṅgāyata history. Women in a very high position could still afford independent choice and action. The most famous example is the queen of the small kingdom of Kittur (between Belgaum and Dharwar), Rāṇi Cannamma.[194] She was the second wife of King Mallasarja. After his death in 1816, her position in the state became very influential; because the successor to the throne was a young and very weak prince. When he also died in 1824, a conflict broke out with the British about the succession. The British political agent at Dharwar, Thackeray, refused to recognize the adoption made by the young king on his deathbed. He found Queen Cannamma against him, who vigorously defended the independency of her kingdom. When the British marched to Kittur in order to impose their will, the army suffered a humiliating defeat and even Thackeray was killed. The queen is said to have directed the attacks standing on the ramparts of her fort. However, within two months, the British came back with a much larger number of troops;

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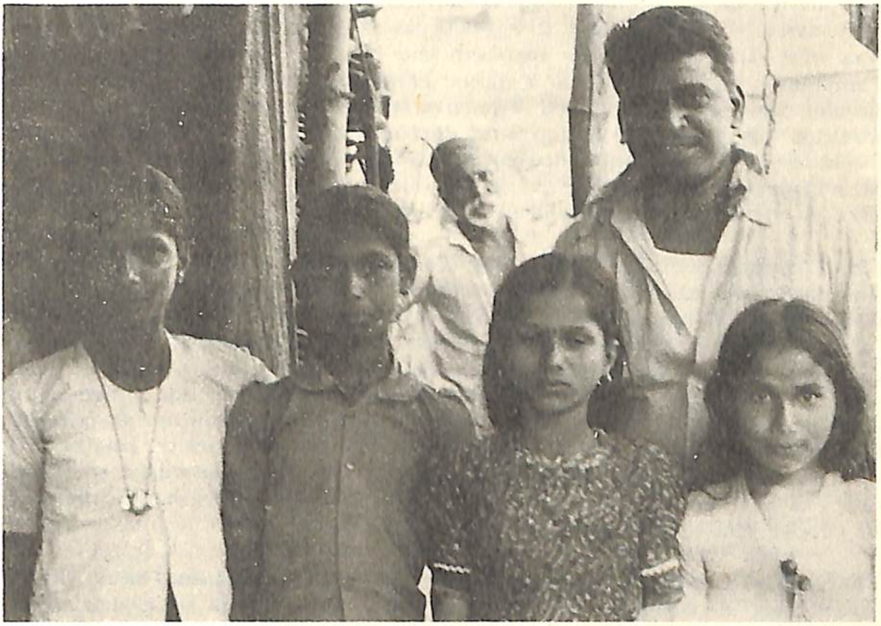
[191] See already Francis BUCHANAN, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara, and Malabar*, London, 1807, Vol. I, pp. 237, 245, 247. Only some forms of temporary seclusion during menstruation occurred, see pages 214-217.

[192] C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 146.

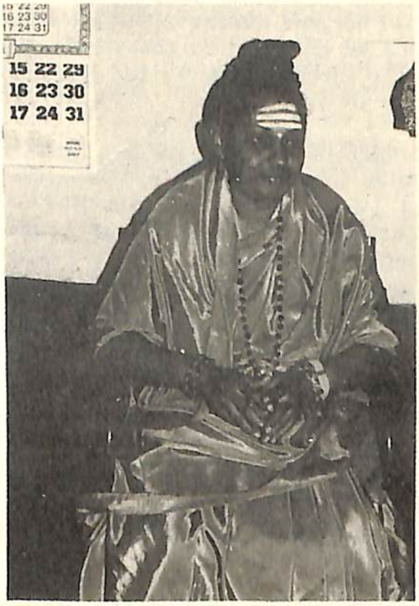
[193] *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXII: *Dhárwár*, Bombay, 1884, p. 106; Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 229.

[194] A biography of the queen was written by Sasashiva WOḌEYAR, *Rani Chennamma*, New Delhi, 1979. See also Sarojini SHINTRI, 'Women in the Virasaiva Movement', *Basava Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1984, pp. 53-60. Other Liṅgāyata women who established their fame on the battlefield were Mallamma (who fought against the Marāṭi leader Śivaji) and the Keḷadi queens Cannamma (against the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb) and Vīrammaji (against Sultan Haidar Ali).



9. Girls wearing liṅga

10. Statue of Rāṇi Cannamma of Kittur in Belgaum



15 22 29
16 23 30
17 24 31

11. The female jagadguru: Māte Mahādēvi (see pages 229-30) and the Kittur army was definitely defeated. Queen Cannamma was taken into custody and she died five years later in prison. The brave queen was the first ruler who resisted the British colonial power. Rāṇi Cannamma is described as a pious Liṅgāyata lady who had as chief adviser the guru of the local Vīraśaiva monastery. It is difficult to say whether her Liṅgāyata background destined her to be the first woman freedom fighter of India. Present-day Liṅgāyatas claim her, of course, as a typical representative of the revolutionary Vīraśaiva tradition; and that is certainly not completely unfounded.

The Colonial Period - Concluding Remarks

The data from the colonial period show a community that is still well aware of the liberal ideas of its founders but is inclined to adapt itself to the dominant culture. With regard to the position of women, we can observe this ambivalence very clearly. Women were still allowed a certain freedom in typical Liṅgāyata aspects; but, in the interaction with other groups, they had to conform to the prevailing standards. Hence, there is a strong difference between in and outside one's own community. Inside the Liṅgāyata quarters, women could enjoy the last relics of the freedom of bygone days; but, in public, they had to behave as proper Hindu women of a rather high caste.

The Liṅgāyata women were still entitled to all aṣṭāvaraṇa rites. Since these rites, in particular the wearing of the liṅga, were peculiarities of their own community, there was no risk of insulting high caste Hindus. To put it simply: Liṅgāyata women were allowed to wear the liṅga because no other used to wear it. But the phenomenon of female gurus had become almost extinct; because such a public role of women could not be accepted by the dominant culture. And, of course, the custom of a special initiation for priests (aytana), not originally Vīraśaiva, was a male prerogative.

Liṅgāyata women were in a rather favoured position in respect of purity rules. In a society where the various castes lived on their own, the sphere of purity and pollution could easily be governed by its own rules. Therefore, Liṅgāyatas could preserve the liberal attitude towards female impurity. We have seen that there were regional differences, as well as variations between castes; but, on the whole, Liṅgāyata women did not suffer much under restrictions during menstruation or childbirth.

The rules for marriages, however, became more and more determined by orthodox Hindu practice during the colonial period. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were still adult marriages in the southern regions; whilst in the north, child marriage had already become standard practice. A century later, a post-puberty marriage in the south was also an exception. On the other hand, the position of widows was always much better than with the Brāhmaṇas, although remarriage was not in all cases permitted.

The scattered data on sexual morality in the colonial period do not enable us to draw firm conclusions. The puritan preaching of the twelfth century did not leave any visible marks in later times. At least the situation concerning prostitution is not different from other castes.

The most remarkable difference with the initial period of Vīraśaivism is certainly the position of women in society. The seclusion, as practised in the high circles of Hindu orthodoxy, did not come into vogue among the Liṅgāyatas; but, for the rest, nothing remained of the independent position of women in the twelfth century. In the colonial period, women did not enjoy any rights to public functions. Women were not anymore allowed to act as guru, as author, or poet. They did not speak in public and were mostly not expected to have an own opinion. The few exceptions, like queen Cannamma, could only afford an independent role because of an extraordinary privileged social position.

Post-Independence India - Women and Religion

When we focus our attention on the data from the post-Independence period, we find many similarities with the foregoing. This is certainly the case with regard to the religious rights of women. In modern India too, Liṅgāyata women have the full right to wear the liṅga (liṅgadhāraṇa). When a child is born, either a boy or a girl, it is invariably given an consecrated personal liṅga. In some circles, the liṅga is even given before birth to the expectant mother; and this custom emphasizes the conviction that the sex of the child is completely irrelevant to the right of liṅgadhāraṇa. No change of status can affect that right. So women may wear the liṅga, whether they are married or not; and even widows are not excluded. The right of women to liṅgadhāraṇa is generally confirmed by anthropological studies.[195] Modern gurus of Vīraśaivism confirm the importance of the religious symbol of their faith, given to men and women alike.[196] Very illustrating is my own observation at the residence of the Ujjaini gurus at Gadimakunte, in February 1989. The senior abbot of Ujjaini, Svāmi Siddhēśvara Rājadēśikēndra, is known as one of the most conservative gurus in modern Vīraśaivism. During our conversation, he extolled continuously the tradition of the five main monasteries (pañcapīṭha), which dates back in his opinion to prehistoric times; whilst he flatly refused to speak about Basava. But, even here, one aspect of Basava's revolution survived. A question about the position of women in the Vīraśaiva religion was answered by calling a woman who had to show that she was wearing the silver box with her personal liṅga. We can conclude that the right of women to wear liṅga is undisputed in modern Vīraśaivism, even in the most conservative circles. Other aṣṭāvaraṇa rights, such as application of sacred ash (vibhūti) and drinking holy foot water (pādōdaka), are equally granted to women.[197] However, it must be added that practice is not always in accordance with these rights. Leela Mullatti reports from her research in Dharwar suburbs in the seventies that 95% of the older generation of women were wearing and worshipping their personal liṅga, whilst 85% of the younger women of her sample practised the iṣṭaliṅga cult. The researcher was not very impressed by the spiritual level of the practice: it remained a formal ritual and the respondents did not show any awareness of the deeper meaning. According to Mullatti, women lacked more than men the required leisure and peace, owing to the pressure of work. But she expresses, nevertheless, the importance of this formal ritual for women who 'certainly enjoy their independent existence in the name of God'.[198] The findings of Mullatti, however, suggest that such enjoyment is less experienced by younger generations. There are indications that this trend has become stronger in recent years. The symbol that once strengthened the self-awareness of Liṅgāyata women is gradually losing to some extent its great significance; because modern society enables women in other ways to develop an independent position.

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[195] See e.g.: C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 98-99; C. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, p. 2; Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, pp. 30-31; several Village Studies of the *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, Nrs. 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 38; S. VASANTHA KUMAR, *A Critical Study of the Initiation Ceremony or the Lingadharana Ceremony*, B.D. thesis, Serampore Univ., 1973, pp. 29, 48.

[196] See e.g.: SHIVAMURTHY Shivacharya, *Vīraśaiva - View of Man and Woman in Relation to God*, Sirigere, 1985, p. 43; Māte MAHĀDĒVI, *A Guide to Liṅgāyatism*, Dharwar, 1973, p. 75; LINGANANDA, *Emblem of God*, Dharwar, 1973, pp. vi, 54.

When even liṅga-wearing is not so important for women anymore, there will scarcely be any place for the subsequent ritual of initiation, the dīkṣe. The rite, often compared with confirmation in Christianity, has lost much of its importance. Already in the first half of this century, it was only in exceptional cases that girls were initiated, as we have seen. Nowadays, women hardly ever undergo the initiation ritual: and then mostly at an advanced age. Mullatti found under the two hundred women of her sample only two who had undergone dīkṣe. Both were elderly women who were ready to follow the strict rules of conduct which are nowadays by many people connected with the status of one who has been initiated.[199] Because the elaborate ritual is rather expensive, it is sometimes performed for whole groups in a monastery. In some cases, the dīkṣe ritual is connected with the celebration of marriage. Most people, however, are not very eager to undergo the ritual and restrict its significance to Jaṅgama boys who obtain their priestly qualification by a dīkṣe rite (aytana). Nowadays, some influential gurus try to breathe new life into the initiation custom, for example by organizing mass dīkṣe ceremonies for boys and girls of eight to ten years old.[200] But it remains to be seen whether the initiation will be practised on a large scale again. So far, only a few people want to undergo the ritual, among them hardly any women.

In the colonial period, we did not find widely-known female gurus. The tradition of female guruship seemed to have died out. However, in the post-Independence period, there are again some influential women gurus.

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[197] PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, pp. 92, 99.

[198] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 188-189, 202.

[199] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 189-190.

[200] E.g. the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Dr. SHIVAMURTHY Shivacharya Mahaswamiji and Jagadguru Māte MAHĀDĒVI. See the latter's *A Guide to Lingayatism*, p. 14.

Apparently, modern development made it possible that this old tradition revived. Śaraṇamma of Sholapur and Sajjaṅguḍa Amma are two aged women who have great fame as accomplished mystics and attract many people by teaching and counseling.[201] However, the most famous name is certainly Māte Mahādēvi.[202] She belongs to the category of progressive gurus with an academic background, who attract so many people in the last decades. She was born in 1946 in a doctor's family at Chitradurga. Her original name was Ratnamma and she belonged to the Gāṇiga caste. After secondary school, she started her college studies in science. When she was eighteen years old, she visited a religious festival in her hometown, organized by the Taraḷabāḷu monastery of Sirigere. On this occasion, she fell under the spell of the eloquent Svāmi Liṅgānanda, who was one of the speakers. The impressive orator was called Abhinava Vivēkānanda (modern Vivēkānanda), since he imitated the great saint of modern Hinduism in clothing, attitude and rhetoric.[203] Liṅgānanda took orders at the rather orthodox Liṅgāyata maṭha of Suttur; but he started an independent spiritual institution at Davangere. The young girl student, who had read the works of Vivēkānanda with enthusiasm, made contact with Svāmi Liṅgānanda and chose him as her guru. Some months later, in the summer of 1965, she took her B.Sc. degree; thereafter she joined the svāmi in his āśrama, in spite of resistance by her relatives. Already after one year, she got her initiation into monastic life (jaṅgamadīkṣe) from her guru. She assumed the name Mahādēvi, since a vision of Akka Mahādēvi inspired her to make the definite choice for the religious life. In the next year, the two gurus had to leave Davangere under the pressure of orthodox circles; and they started a new āśrama on the outskirts of Dharwar: the Jaganmāte Akka Mahādēvi Āśrama. Māte (mother) Mahādēvi, as she is usually called, continued her academic education at Karnatak University where she received a M.A. degree in philosophy with the classification 'first class first'. The most remarkable event in the life of the female guru was her ascending of a new jagadguru (world teacher) throne, named after Akka Mahādēvi, at the Dharwar centre in 1970. For the more conservative Vīraśaivas, it was, of course, shocking that a woman, and even a non-Jaṅgama by birth, assumed the highest religious dignity. The initiation ceremony was conducted by Śrī Mallikārjuna Svāmīji of Śivānanda maṭha in Gadag, an independent monastery with monks from different castes. The acquirement of this new dignity also demonstrated that Mahādēvi had surpassed her teacher.

Māte Mahādēvi proved to be a successful author. She published a number of books on Vīraśaiva religion and history. Some of her books have also been translated into English.[204] In her opinion, there is a difference between Vīraśaivism and Liṅgāyatism. The former is understood to mean the classical religion based on the Śaivāgamas, which lives on in the orthodox gurusthalada monasteries. But by Liṅgāyatism, she means the movement founded by Basava, which is characterized by the wearing of the globular iṣṭaliṅga and the teaching of progressive social ethics. It is this humanitarian religion of equality that she wants to propagate. Consequently, she strongly opposes casteism and preaches universal brotherhood. In religious practice, the personality of Basava was given a central position. Originally, the first element of the Vīraśaiva triad (guru-liṅga-jaṅgama) meant: 'the guru who gave the liṅga to you'; and, consequently, everybody had to worship in the first place one's own personal guru, then one's iṣṭaliṅga, and finally other holy men. Māte Mahādēvi, however, interprets 'guru' as: 'the universal teacher Basava'. In consequence, the primal worship is the veneration of Guru Basava, usually in the form of a poster, then comes the worship of the personal liṅga, and in the third place the reverence to all holy persons including one's own guru. The great emphasis on Basava as 'Universal Teacher and Saviour of Mankind' gives a missionary zeal to the movement. The name of the organization is significant: Viśva Kalyāṇa Mission (World Welfare Mission). Conversion from all castes and creeds is advocated and, indeed, a number of non-Liṅgāyatas have joined the fold. The mission had opened spiritual centres in a suburb of Bangalore (Basava Maṇṭapa), in a village near Bangalore (Basava Gaṅgōtri) and at the holy place of Basava's samādhi Kūḍalasaṅgama (Basava Dharma Pīṭha). As the names of the centres indicate, the cult of Basava is now dominant and the former devotion for Akka Mahādēvi has faded into the background. The various establishments are inhabited by a small number of women who have followed Mātājī in the choice for the religious life.

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[201] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 32, 53, 190.

[202] Biographical notes in all her publications, and in a pamphlet published by her organization: *Her Holiness Jagadguru Māthe Mahādevi: A Profile*, Bangalore, n.y. N.J. BRADFORD gives in his dissertation some interesting details about her life and spiritual career, although he displays an obvious antipathy towards the woman guru: *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, pp. 349-357. I interviewed Māte Mahādēvi in January 1987 and in January 1989.

[203] This is also the reason that he took the name Liṅgānanda, which is a very uncommon name for a Vīraśaiva monk. But the monks of Vivēkānanda's Rāmakṛṣṇa Order have always a name ending in '-ānanda' (bliss).

The latest activity of Māte Mahādēvi is the organizing of a great annual festival like that of Sirigere, where she first met her guru. In 1988, the first Śaraṇa Mēla took place at Kūḍalasaṅgama. Although several religious and civil authorities supported the event by joining the working committee, the festival is not yet the universal Liṅgāyata meeting that is intended. According to my own observations at the second festival in 1989, the visitors were mostly villagers from the region and officials who were in some way connected with the Mission.[205] However, Māte Mahādēvi has certainly revived the old tradition of female guruship. And that makes her an outstanding person in the modern Liṅgāyata community, although her endeavours to bring all sections of Vīraśaivism together have not yet been very successful.

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[204] Māte MAHĀDĒVI, *Revolution in Kalyana*, Dharwar, 1973; id., *A Guide to Lingayatism*, Dharwar, 1973; id., *Lingayatism*, Bangalore, 1986; id., *Lord Basava*, Bangalore, 1981; id., *Who is a Hindu?* Bangalore, 1989.

[205] The number of devotees at the Mēla was certainly not the 300,000 claimed by the organization, but around 3,000. My observations do not give any support to Bradford's negative picture of Māte Mahādēvi as the guru of 'the rich and the educated'. See BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, p. 353.

Post-Independence India - Pollution versus Purity

The situation with regard to the purity of women has not changed significantly. Nowadays, Liṅgāyata women still enjoy a more favourable position than women of the castes of the twice-born. The data from many anthropological studies confirm that Liṅgāyata women hardly face any restriction on account of pollution. K. Ishwaran noticed in his village Shivapur (Dharwar District) that the Liṅgāyatas did not observe any pollution tabus regarding birth and menstruation; in this respect, they distinguished themselves from the Brāhmaṇas and the castes which follow them.[206] According to Parvathamma, the central core of Vīraśaiva teaching is the refusal to recognize the concept of ritual pollution. She observed in her village in Bellary District, called Kshetra, that Liṅgāyata women were not considered to be polluting during menstruation and, consequently, no form of segregation was practised. Similarly, childbirth was not regarded as involving pollution. If it was impossible to have a priest available on the day of birth itself, the mother could even receive the personal liṅga for her child before delivery: apparently, the visit of the priest was not necessary for re-establishing purity after childbirth.[207] Mullatti, too, states that Liṅgāyata women are never impure and, consequently, are always allowed to perform any ritual. Most women of her sample in Dharwar town showed a vivid awareness of the advantages of Liṅgāyata conceptions.[208]

Yet, there are some traces of pollution removal in Liṅgāyata culture. This appears from our selection of the village studies connected with the 1961 census. Not all village reports mention the rules of the Liṅgāyatas concerning purity. Conduct during menstruation is reported from one village only: in that case, no purity rule was observed.[209] But most village studies give some information about pollution through childbirth. In nine villages, there is no indication of pollution after childbirth: neither mother nor child are considered to need any form of ritual purification.[210] However, from one village it is reported that the Liṅgāyatas do not acknowledge any ritual pollution after childbirth

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206. K. ISHWARAN, 'A Village in Karṇāṭaka', in: Clarence Maloney [ed], *South Asia*, New York, 1974, p. 29.

207. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, p. 5; PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 85-86, 96-98. Her interpretation of the liṅgadhāraṇa ceremony before deliverance is criticized by I. Karve in his foreword in her book: *Politics & Religion*, pp. V-VI. He thinks that this custom stresses the need of initiation as soon as possible, comparable to the (Roman-Catholic) understanding of baptism. However, there is no reason to assume that Liṅgāyatas would prefer such an extremely early initiation: for Parvathamma discovered that the ceremony could also be postponed if a priest was not available. In my opinion, Parvathamma is right in connecting the custom with the purity conception. The question remains whether early liṅgadhāraṇa is a proof of total absence of pollution. The argumentation could be reversed as well: because the liṅga is already given, pollution cannot affect mother and child anymore. The data of the Census publications point in this direction, as we shall see.

208. Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, pp. 35-36, 186-187.

209. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 34.

210. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 7, 16, 18, 19, 20, 26, 28, 34, 37.

but, nevertheless, the priest has to come on the day of birth or the third day in order to purify the house and its inhabitants.[211] Here we see a clear example of the incongruity of theory and practice. People are quite aware of the theory of non-existance of pollution but here, not far from the Marāṭi border, purification has become part of the culture of all the villagers, including the Liṅgāyatas. It is the same region where already in the nineteenth century was reported that the awareness of pollution was stronger than elsewhere. From another village in the same district, it is reported that Liṅgāyatas generally do not regard childbirth as polluting, but some of the households stated that they observed a pollution period of five days.[212] The five days' pollution is also reported from a village in Dharwar District; whilst a village study in Belgaum District clearly indicates that pollution is removed on the third or fifth day by purificatory rites connected with the ceremony of tying the liṅga (liṅgadhāraṇa).[213] The same practice, but eventually postponed to the eleventh day, is reported from a village in Chitradurga District.[214]

It is obvious that the strict Liṅgāyata doctrine regarding purity is not generally followed. Concepts of pollution are taken over from the Brāhmaṇa culture in several villages. And the Liṅgāyata priest is not always invited only to initiate the new-born Vīraśaiva, but certainly also to perform purificatory rites which are originally alien to the Liṅgāyata tradition. It is most probable that the custom of giving a liṅga to the expectant mother before delivery must hence be interpreted as, at least partly, intended to avoid birth pollution. The fear of pollution is particularly apparent in the northern border region of Karnataka, where already in the nineteenth century the influence of orthodox values was felt most.

There is still another occasion which gives rise to purification rites that are not quite congruent with Liṅgāyata theory. Although the menstrual periods as such are not marked by a special ritual observance, the first menstruation of a girl is surrounded with a number of rituals. We saw that a certain celebration was held on this occasion as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. What started as a simple festivity with scarcely any ritual meaning has now grown into an elaborate ceremony of many days, which is strongly influenced by conceptions of purity: a typical example of sanskritization. Parvathamma described in detail the events after a girl attained puberty. This took place in 1960 in the village of Kshetra where she was based for fieldwork. The first part of the ceremony lasted for five days. During this period, the girl was confined to the hall and the bathroom of her house. The ceremonies of the first day included: the ritual of touching a tree; a ritual bath with milk, and liquid butter, and cow's urine; a normal water bath; a

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211. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 22: *Hunnur Village* (Bijapur District).
212. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 10: *Chiksindgi* (Bijapur District).
213. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 11: *Hulkoti* (Dharwar District); No. 23: *Umarani Village* (Belgaum District).
214. *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 41: *Bidarakere* (Chitradurga District).

special diet and a special way of eating (using three fingers only); and a consultation with an astrologer. A message was also sent to the girl's fiancé, who was subsequently entertained by his friends who threw coloured water at him (which play may last upto eight days). On every evening, visitors, mainly married women, came to the girl's house, threw rice at her, waved the lamp ceremonially before her, and sang puberty songs. On the third day, a festive tent (pandal) was erected for these evening assemblies. The fifth day was marked by purification rites. The house was white-washed; the floors were cleaned with cowdung; and the girl got new bangles. The family priest was invited to perform the purificatory rites with the holy foot water (pādōdaka) and the ceremonial coconut water (karuṇāprasāda). And, of course, a feast was organized. The girl received gifts from the relatives of her future husband. This evening, the pollution was removed, most restrictions for the girl were ended, and the actual celebration could start. Till the sixteenth day, the girl, dressed like a goddess, was the centre of attention. Every evening, a dinner party was held: in her house or in that of friends or relatives. This period was concluded with a very big party at her house. Next day, normal life started again including household duties; but, for some time, possibly till the thirtieth day, the girl was surrounded with extra care and attention. And the end of the month, the girl worshipped the water of the well (Gaṅgāpūje) and the special period was concluded. Parvathamma emphasizes that this ritual has not so many aspects of pollution as the ritual in case of a Kṣatriya girl, also observed by her in the village.[215] This is certainly true: the Kṣatriya girl was not even allowed to touch the earth and had to walk on wooden planks. But, in the case of the Liṅgāyata girl, there are also a few elements which prove that this occasion is considered to involve pollution to some extent. The ritual of the sacred footwater, for example, is a Liṅgāyata form; but it is applied here, at least partly, to meet an orthodox Hindu need: removal of pollution. Mullatti's remark that the rites show how a girl's menstruation is accepted as a natural and even auspicious occasion, is not completely correct and must be inspired by a too great enthusiasm for her own religion.[216]

Post-Independence India - Marriage

It is rather difficult to get a clear picture of the actual age of marriage in the modern period. As early as 1929 the famous Sarda Act prohibited marriages with girls below the age of fourteen; and, after Independence, the marrigeable age for girls was even raised to fifteen years. But the old customs persisted and, particularly in the villages, child marriage remained rather common. Since it is a punishable act, people tend to deny its occurrence; and, hence, official statistics give often a too optimistic picture. Serious anthropological studies, however, give some indications about the actual practice among the various castes.

A good example is D.A. Chekki's study about a suburb of Dharwar, carried out in 1962-1963. In his sample of Liṅgāyatas, he managed to

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215. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, pp. 23-43.
216. MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, p. 37, see also p. 93.

find out the age of first marriage of 257 women. No less than 140 of them married before they were thirteen years old; and for another 63 women, the age at marriage was thirteen to fifteen years. The most remarkable fact was that 64 of these early-married women were, at the time of the enquiry, under the age of twenty-three: so these early marriages took place not long before 1962. There were even at the time of the enquiry 11 married females under fourteen years old.[217] Apparently, the Liṅgāyatas in this Dharwar suburb practised still child marriage on a large scale, in spite of the already long existing legislation. The occurrence of child marriage is also visible, albeit not so obvious, in the study of Leela Mullatti, who also undertook fieldwork in the Dharwar suburbs, but a decade later. She does not give exact figures, but mentions marriages between fourteen and eighteen years for 22% of the younger generation women in her sample. Child marriage used to be almost universal in this community: 95% of the older women (i.e. women with grown-up children) were given in marriage when they were between ten and fourteen. Although Mullatti's information remains rather vague, her conclusion that there is in her samples not 'any incidence and thus no problem of child marriage adversely affecting the status of woman in Virasaivism' is certainly not justified.[218]

If this unlawful practice is still found in the urban milieu, it can be expected on an even larger scale in the villages. Indeed, we find in our selection of village studies of the 1961 census series several reports about child marriage, although these government records tend to be flattered for obvious reasons. Out of 23 villages, there were only 4 which claimed explicitly that there were no instances of marriages with girls below fifteen.[219] In the other 19 villages, several or even many of those marriages occurred according to the tables; although, sometimes, the researchers wrote that actual child marriage (by which they meant prepuberty marriage) was extinct. It is not always clear whether the Liṅgāyatas in these villages also practised such early marriages; but there is not much reason to suppose that they formed an exception. Early marriage under Liṅgāyatas can be proved for 8 villages, either because it is stated explicitly, or because all girls of the village over fourteen were already married.[220] Sometimes, the census officials try to demonstrate that there is, nevertheless, a positive development.. A curious example is the study about the village of Kamalnagar (Bidar District). Here, the age at marriage at the time of the census is given for Liṅgāyata girls as twelve to fifteen; but it is reminded that, about two decades back, the age of the Liṅgāyata brides was five to seven years.[221] It must be doubted whether these extreme figures are in accordance with reality. However, there is no doubt that even in the sixties many marriages in the villages of Karnataka were performed in

[217] Danesh A. CHEKKI, *Modernization and Kin Network*, Leiden, 1974, pp. 74-75.

[218] Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, pp. 115-116.

[219] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 7, 15, 25, 37.

[220] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 17, 19, 20, 23, 27, 31, 38, 41.

[221] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 19, p. 19.

contravention of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, which put the minimum age of marriage for girls at fifteen.[222]

Early marriages are invariably arranged by the parents. Research in the sixties and seventies demonstrated that Liṅgāyatas were generally convinced of the rightness of this system of arranged marriages.[223] There were hardly any exceptions, not even in the case of grown-up bridegrooms and brides. The matches for Liṅgāyata girls are preferably sought in the circle of their own relatives. The preferential bridegroom for a girl is her mother's younger brother. Next to these uncle-niece marriages, also cross-cousin marriages are common. Through these bonds of marriages, two families can be intertwined in a special way: receiving a girl from the other family is balanced each time by giving away one of the girls from one's own family. This affinity system is called kaḷḷubaḷḷi - the creeper of love.[224] Sometimes, it is claimed that this system is favourable for the bride; because she comes into a familiar house. Consequently, tensions between a woman and her mother-in-law would be completely absent under Liṅgāyatas, in contrast with the usual situation.[225] But such argumentation is not very convincing; and some disadvantages, especially for the girl, can also be imagined: indication of her own preference is almost ruled out, and her parental home will less easier function as a refuge in case of problems. In the last twenty years, the trend is to look for bridegrooms outside the kin fold.[226]

A remarkable feature of Liṅgāyata marriage is the custom of dowry. In former times, the parents of the bridegroom had to pay a bride-price to the parents of the bride as a compensation for the loss of a household member, particularly in view of her working power. Nowadays, the custom of paying bride-price is almost extinct; only very low-caste Liṅgāyatas in the villages still practise it. The usual custom under the Liṅgāyatas at present is dowry: the parents of the bride have to pay an amount of money or to give valuable presents to the bridegroom and his family in order to get their daughter married. Especially the price for well-educated boys in the urban setting is very high. Amounts up to tenthousands of rupees and gifts of a scooter, a car, or a house are mentioned nowadays. This surprising shift from bride-price to dowry took place around 1960. In the village studies of the 1961 census, we find the first reports about dowry among the Liṅgāyatas; whilst the bride-price was still the usual custom. From many villages was reported that a few richer families of Liṅgāyatas took over the custom of dowry recently.[227] The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 has certainly not stopped this development. It is one of the examples of the process of sanskritization in which Liṅgāyatas adopt the customs of the Brāhmaṇas. However, it is very doubtful whether this system is an improvement for the Liṅgāyata community. Dowry can be the source of immense problems. If the dowry was not high enough in the eyes of the bridegroom's relatives, life can become very difficult for the new daughter-in-law. Her new environment may exert enormous pressure on her in order to obtain additional payment. Suicides as a result of dowry quarrel do occur in many communities, and there are even reports about murder in connection with dowry.

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[222] See also the findings of K. ISHWARAN in his village in Dharwar District: *A Populistic Community and Modernization in India*, Leiden, 1977, p. 42.

[223] ISHWARAN, *A Populistic Community and Modernization in India*, p. 41; CHEKKI, *Modernization and Kin Network*, pp. 73-74; MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 101, 121. It is illustrative that the latter depicts the only woman in her sample who made a choice marriage as a childish and unreliable character, p. 143.

[224] N.J. BRADFORD described elaborately the kaḷḷubaḷḷi system as it functioned in Mrityunjayanagar, a suburb of Dharwar: *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, pp. 34-127. See also CHEKKI, *Modernization and Kin Network*, pp. 79-83; N.K. KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 67-69; *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 41.

[225] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, p. 129.

[226] K.G. GURUMURTHY, *Kallapura*, Dharwar, 1976, p. 65.

On the other hand, the Liṅgāyatas have retained an old liberal custom in another respect. The remarriage of widows is still permitted among the Liṅgāyatas, in contravention of the strict Brāhmaṇa rules. These marriages are performed with a very simple ritual, consisting mainly of presenting clothing and fruits to the woman (uḍike). Under pressure of public opinion, remarriage is not regarded as auspicious; and Liṅgāyatas of higher ranks tend to keep secret that there are such couples in their families. Some instances are reported of Liṅgāyata castes who claim a higher position because of the absence of widow marriages. Nevertheless, such marriages are found everywhere and among all castes in the Liṅgāyata community. In our selection of village studies of the 1961 census, only two villages were found where Liṅgāyatas stated that their community did not allow widow remarriage.[228] From 16 villages was reported, that Liṅgāyatas allowed widows to marry again, just as most other non-Brāhmaṇa castes.[229] At least in this respect, the Liṅgāyatas remained loyal to their humanitarian ideals.

Post-Independence India - Adultery and Prostitution

With the scarce data available, it is not possible to give a coherent picture of sexual morality and sanctions on behaviour among the Liṅgāyatas in the modern period. The village studies of the census do not provide more than obligatory remarks about the sacrosanct tie of marriage. But academic anthropologists who undertake field work are usually very interested in deviant behaviour and the way in which a village society reacts to it. So a number of interesting case studies are available which give some insight into the Liṅgāyata way of life.

Extramarital relations occur in every community, also among the

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[227] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 26, 27, 28, 31, 34, 37, 38; See also KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, pp. 80-81.

[228] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 16, 33.

[229] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 28, 31, 38, 41; See also PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 95, 102; K. ISHWARAN, *Tradition and Economy in Village India*, London / New York, 1966, pp. 19-20; MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 142-145, 187; BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, p. 237.

Lingāyatas. As in all communities, the Lingāyatas do not regard all affairs as equally intolerable. Although it is certainly not according to Basava's teachings, a man is generally allowed more freedom than a woman. Ishwaran reports an illustrative event from his village in Dharwar District, which took place at the end of the fifties. A Lingāyata man carried on an affair with a low-caste woman. As they met secretly and did not show their relationship in public, the situation was tolerable. However, when the woman died and the man participated in her funeral procession by carrying a torch, he went beyond the limit. The Lingāyata caste elders imposed on him the sanction of a purification ceremony.[230] So, not the affair as such but the public display gave offence. A similar story is related by Srinivas. It happened in his village in Mysore District in 1952. A young man of the Lingāyata community had a relationship with a young widow from the Okkaliga caste. Moreover, when fellow castemen of the woman warned the man because of his illicit behaviour, they were terribly insulted by him in public. A council, consisting of the village headman, a Lingāyata priest and some Okkaligas, imposed a fine and ordered that the widow should marry again soon.[231] Again, the public offence was more important than the affair as such.

A more serious offence against public decency was reported by Parvathamma. It occurred in her research village in Bellary District at the end of the fifties. A young Lingāyata woman was impregnated by a low-caste servant. The woman was not punished in any way; but she was forced to designate her brother-in-law, a widower, as the father of her child. When she became pregnant again after two years, the caste elders tried to arrange a marriage with an old man; but when the woman refused, they left the situation as it was. Parvathamma compares this case with a similar incident in the same village among the Kurubas. A widow, made pregnant by a man of her own caste, was excommunicated; and she could only be readmitted after punishment, purification and reconciliation. Twice-born castes would even react stronger: a Kṣatriya widow from the village who had a lover from another caste was declared dead.[232] Apparently, the Lingāyata community reacts very mildly at such illicit behaviour.

This is also demonstrated by another event in the same village, described in detail by Parvathamma. It is the tragicomic history of a very young girl who was given in marriage for reasons of property to an older, mentally retarded man. The girl, who made an independent and self-assured impression, escaped from the unsatisfying relationship with her husband by making secret assignations with a Brāhmaṇa boy of bad reputation. However, a Lingāyata boy found out about the affair and he betrayed one of their meetings to the relatives of the girl's husband. When the girl met her lover in a neighbouring village, they were caught by a delegation of three men and locked up in the house. The local substitute headman hushed up the argument, and sent for the Liṅgāyata caste elders of the girl's village. The remarkable point of this story is that, subsequently, nothing happened; although many people were involved and emotions had run high. The lover was released because he had to go to work; and the girl went for some time to her parental home. The officials did not feel the need to punish anybody; but their sole aim was to restore peace and order, and to prevent a divorce with complicated property consequences. Parvathamma suggests that the Liṅgāyata community lacks effective control because there is no central religious authority recognized by all. And she concludes that the Liṅgāyata community is much more liberal in its attitude towards these social and moral problems.[233]

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[230] K. ISHWARAN, *Shivapur*, London, 1968, pp. 162-163.

[231] M.N. SRINIVAS, 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura', *AA*, Vol. 61, 1959, p. 8. In a different version in his book *The Remembered Village*, Delhi, 1979, p. 157.

[232] C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics & Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, pp. 104-105.

However, even for this liberal community, there are limits. The Liṅgāyata temple priest in a village in Mysore District, described by Srinivas, went too far when he took two loose women in. His mistresses were sent away when they wanted to participate in the cooking for an annual religious feast.[234] Again, the crucial point was the public display of illicit behaviour, which could not be tolerated, especially not on such a special occasion as a religious festival.

This fear for public offence might also be the reason why it is almost impossible to get some idea about prostitution among present-day Liṅgāyatas. The institute of the religious prostitutes, the basavis, has disappeared. We found that, as early as the beginning of this century, the basavis lost their esteem under the influence of Western values. After the dedication of girls to gods and temples was prohibited in 1947 (Dēvadāsi Act), the custom became extinct among the Liṅgāyatas. In the census reports of 1961, only a few cases of basavis are mentioned: not in the Liṅgāyata community but in some untouchable castes.[235] Of course, prostitution in one or another form will not be totally absent in the Liṅgāyata community; but we have no reliable data. Even Leela Mullatti, although herself a Liṅgāyata, obtained little information about this and only from a few women. This information suggests that the Liṅgāyatas do not form an exception and prostitution occurs on the same scale as in other castes. One informant made a typically Vīraśaiva remark: she did not consider prostitution to be wrong since in Vīraśaiva history there were so many devout prostitutes.[236] That part of the history of Vīraśaivism is at least not totally forgotten.

Post-Independence India - Women and Society

Finally, we shall consider the position of Liṅgāyata women in present-day society. The lack of reliable data must make us very cautious; but a few remarks could be made. It is striking that Liṅgāyata social scientists usually do not display much restraint but tend to eulogize the possibilities of the women in their community. Two typical examples can be given: one about village society and one from an urban setting.

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[233] C. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, pp. 44-63.

[234] SRINIVAS, *The Remembered Village*, pp. 65-66. See also: SRINIVAS, 'The Dominant Caste in Rampura', p. 8.

[235] *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XI, Pt. VI, No. 21 (Bēḍa, Bārika, Mādiga castes), 22 (Marāṭa, Holeya castes), 23 (Mahār, Māṅg castes), 26 (caste unknown), 37 (Vālmīki, Mādiga castes).

[236] Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, pp. 118-120.

K. Ishwaran studied a village in Dharwar district and, on the basis of this fieldwork, he describes India's villages as 'populistic communities'. Such a populistic community has the following characteristics: it is a community of peasants; the community is structurally pluralistic; elitism as an ideology is absent; and, finally, although preserving its local identity, there are links with the outer world.[237] According to Ishwaran, this social organization of village life in Northern Karnataka was profoundly influenced by Vīraśaivism. Therefore, one of its main features is the joint family system, in which the woman has a key position. He states: 'As a dominant cultural force in the area, Lingayatism exercised a profound influence on the evolution of the populistic community. A major result of this development is the growth of a family system in which the Lingayat emphasis on the equality of sexes constantly countered the classical Hindu pattern of Sanskritization.'[238] In Shivapur, the village under study, the woman is the pivot of the family system; and this is especially true among the Liṅgāyatas, according to Ishwaran. He mentions the women's incredible expertise in genealogical history; their role as mother, wife, sister and daughter; and the fact that the kinship system would mainly be traced through maternal and affinal sides. However, Ishwaran's tribute to the Vīraśaiva heritage is not very convincing. In most parts of India, the joint family is a common feature in village life. And there is no indication at all that the role of women in Northern Karnataka villages would be different in any respect. Actually, Ishwaran's earlier books on the same village present a quite different picture. His beautiful, balanced village survey 'Shivapur' contains a chapter on men and women which opens with the pregnant sentences: 'Shivapur is a man's world. Domination by men colours every aspect of life.'[239] From that book, it appears clearly that the power within the families is generally in the hands of the men, and particularly the contacts outside the house in the village society are men's buisiness. For women, especially in the higher castes like the Liṅgāyatas, there is no role in the public life of the village. It is also recorded that all education for women is strongly opposed by the village men (with the curious argument that it would constitute the direct cause of abortions). However, in his later studies, Ishwaran tries to demonstrate the effect of the equalitarian views of the Vīraśaiva tradition on village life in Northern Karnataka. The fact that the above quoted book on populistic communities is dedicated to his Vīraśaiva guru will not be without significance.

It is more probable that women in urban society would have better opportunities to develop their talents and personalities. Leela Mullatti, who studied six suburbs of Dharwar, is convinced that the Vīraśaiva tradition

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237. K. ISHWARAN, *A Populistic Community and Modernization in India*, Leiden, 1977, pp. 2-3.
238. ISHWARAN, *A Populistic Community and Modernization in India*, p. 39.
239. K. ISHWARAN, *Shivapur*, London, 1968, p. 34; see for the following pp. 34-73.

is still of great importance for the women in her community. A typical quotation from her study is the following: 'Among the many Virasaiva reforms, something that can be seen to this day is the improved image of Virasaiva women. And this can be seen, not in philosophical doctrines, but in everyday life, in the religious, social and economic, and family life.'[240] We have already seen some examples from her study about the religious practice in which Liṅgāyata women indeed enjoy some rights that are unknown in other castes. However, in the other sections of life, the equality of Liṅgāyata women is not so conspicuous. Family life is strongly dominated by classical values; because most Liṅgāyatas live in joint families which are ruled by the eldest generation. So, generally, men have their dinner first and women eat what is left over; women address their husbands in the honorific plural form, etcetera.[241] In Mullatti's sample, most women were primarily oriented towards family and household duties, although 70% of the younger generation women declared that they were willing to undertake jobs if there was an opportunity to do so (which seems to be scarcely more than a socially desirable answer).[242] However, according to Mullatti's survey, female education is increasing considerably. Among first generation women, she found only one graduate; but no less than 27% of the younger women had had a college education.[243] This is surely a sign of the improvement of women's position in the Liṅgāyata community; but it does not justify Mullatti's extreme conclusions about the salutary impact of the Vīraśaiva tradition.

We must conclude that Liṅgāyata authors tend to exaggerate the effects of their own religious tradition.[244] However, it cannot be denied that Liṅgāyata women in an urban milieu took advantage from the great promotion of education in their community. We shall deal with this typical Liṅgāyata education boom in the next chapter. But now already can be mentioned that a number of Liṅgāyata women made an impressive career in the academic and political domain. Of course, they form an exception and most women in the community do still perform only the submissive role of an Indian housewife. But, at least, it is accepted in the Liṅgāyata community that women follow higher education and develop their talents. Probably this cannot be detached from the equalitarian Vīraśaiva tradition. The old ideals of the vacanakāras are still repeated by many religious leaders of modern times. Even the brave Queen Cannamma has not been forgotten: she is honoured by statues in several towns and her example is a popular subject of religious discourses.[245]

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[240] Leela MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Poona, 1977, p. 30.

[241] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 123-149. See about the joint family system among the Liṅgāyatas also N.K. KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, Delhi, 1977, p. 77.

[242] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, p. 139.

[243] MULLATTI, *Impact of Virasaivism on the Status of Woman*, pp. 72-73.

[244] A striking exception is R.T. JANGAM, who asserts that 'the concept of equality preached by Basaveshwara has not benefited the Veerashaiva women in any remarkable way except in the realm of spirituality or philosophy': 'Basavehwara and the Status of Women', *Basava Journal*, Vol. 9/4-10/1, 1985, p. 7. His argument is, however, rather vague.

Post-Independence India - Concluding Remarks

The data from the post-Independence period reveal that the situation of Liṅgāyata women's rights and participation is not very different from the foregoing colonial age. Particularly in the realm of religion, women continue to enjoy a certain freedom which is unknown to the Hindu twice-born castes. Women have full rights on the eight classical sacraments of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa); and especially the wearing of the personal liṅga is practised by the majority of women in the Liṅgāyata community. However, this symbol of equal rights is losing its great significance of bygone days to some extent. And the initiation (dīkṣe) of women, although permitted, is only a marginal phenomenon.

One striking feature of modern Vīraśaivism is the restoration of female teachership. Nowadays, there are a few women in charge of a monastery, and one of them is widely known: Māte Mahādēvi has revived the old tradition of the women gurus. She has propagated with great zeal the equalitarian message of Basava and even made him a central cultic personality. The orthodox circles are, of course, not very pleased with this development; and Māte Mahādēvi's attempts to unite all Vīraśaiva believers on this line are not very successful. But the dynamic female guru is certainly vital to the community's image amongst outsiders.

Liṅgāyata women are still in a favoured position with regard to purity regulation. Childbirth and menstruation are generally not regarded as polluting. Consequently, segregation and purificatory measures are mostly unknown. Only in the extreme northern part of Karnataka can we find, as in the nineteenth century, a greater sensitivity to ritual pollution. However, there is one remarkable exception to the general negation of pollution. The occasion of a girl's attaing puberty is often marked by elaborate rituals, containing elements with an undenying purificatory character. Apparently, the Liṅgāyatas could not resist the influence of the customs of the twice-born castes: and this is again a striking example of sanskritization.

A definite improvement on the situation in the colonial period is the rise of the marrigeable age for girls. The custom of prepuberty marriage is almost extinct in the Liṅgāyata community, which is congruent with the general trend in Southern India. But the data from the sixties and seventies show that girls are normally given in marriage at a rather young age, sometimes even below the minimum age of the Hindu Marriage Act. A development which seems to be unfavourable to the position of women, is the introduction of the dowry system, which replaced the older custom of the bride-price. Ironically, this happened at the same time that legislation was made in order to abolish the dowry custom. On the other hand, the Liṅgāyatas adhered to their principles with regard

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245. An example from the Tōṇṭadārya maṭha at Gadag (Siddhaliṅga svāmi) is given by Lise F. VAIL, *Renunciation, Love, and Power in Hindu Monastic Life*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1987, p. 61.

to the marriage of widows: in contrast with the Brāhmaṇa rules, it is generally permitted among the Liṅgāyatas.

General remarks on the sexual morality among the Liṅgāyatas can hardly be made. However, the anthropological findings do not suggest that the puritanical preaching of the early saints made a distinct impact on the culture of the Liṅgāyatas. On the contrary, the community is generally known as rather liberal towards deviant behaviour. Only public offence is usually corrected; but illicit behaviour as such does not evoke a strong reaction. Since purity is not as central a conception in the Liṅgāyata community as among the twice-born castes, there is not so much fear of ritually polluting behaviour but only concern for the reputation of the community.[246] This is also the reason why there is scarcely any information about prostitution among the Liṅgāyatas, after institutionalized ritual prostitution was officially abolished.

Liṅgāyata women do not play a notable role in the society of post-Independence India. Especially in the villages, there is no proof that the women of the Liṅgāyata community enjoy any special freedom or rights concerning their behaviour in public. In an urban setting, we find among the Liṅgāyatas, as in other higher castes, a number of educated women who are allowed a certain social career. It seems that the Liṅgāyata women benefited from the great stress on education in their community. However, the remarkable public role of women, which characterized the initial period of Vīraśaivism, has never returned.

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246. The effect of ritually polluting behaviour on an orthodox community is described in a marvellous way by the modern Kannaḍa novelist U.R. ANANTAMŪRTI in his book *Saṃskāra*, Mysore, 1977 [first ed. 1965]. It is the story of a Brāhmaṇa settlement where life is completely disrupted; because the community is unable to decide what to do with the body of a man who died as a sinner, having lived with a low-caste woman. It cannot be imagined that this kind of problems would arise in the Liṅgāyata community.

CHAPTER 4

EDUCATION

Historical Background

In medieval India, education was mainly a prerogative of high caste men. Of course, there was domestic training in crafts and vocations among all castes; but institutionalized education, and particularly the imparting of religious knowledge, was confined to the male members of the three higher caste categories (varṇas). These 'twice-born' people were entitled to study the Vedas and other religious literature; although, in practice, mainly the Brāhmaṇas and the nobility provided the students. Teaching was considered to be almost exclusively the right of the Brāhmaṇas. Actually, there were a few teachers of Kṣatriya origin; but they were not held in great esteem.[1] The religious law books, the Dharmaśāstras, emphasize that only Brāhmaṇas are allowed to teach the Vedas; and they are supposed to do so only to students from twice-born castes. Śūdras were explicitly barred from this education.[2] The teaching of the Brāhmaṇas was concentrated in educational centres of three categories: Brāhmaṇa settlements, colleges, and monasteries (or temples).[3] The Brāhmaṇa settlements were called agrahāra or brahmapuri. The former term indicates mostly a village, whilst the latter refers mainly to a quarter of a town; but, sometimes, the terms seem to be interchangeable. These settlements were donated to the Brāhmaṇas by kings and other wealthy persons with the explicit goal of promoting religious education. The colleges or ghaṭikāsthānas were institutes for higher education which resembled to some extent modern universities. There were not many of these institutions in Karnataka during the twelfth century, but some enjoyed a considerable reputation. Finally, the monasteries and the larger temples were centres of learning. Monasteries were founded in Karnataka from the tenth century onward, mostly attached to famous temples. Since the monasteries, maṭhas, were to play a vital role in the Vīraśaiva movement, we shall pay some attention to the history and the character of these institutions.

In particular the Śaiva school of the Kālāmukhas founded many important monasteries in Karnataka.[4] These 'black faces' (the name refers probably to a marking of the forehead in black) were not a popular movement like the Vīraśaivas, but an organization of priests. They could be aptly called a monastic order.[5] The Kālāmukhas did not have their own laity; but the organization consisted of religious men who had taken certain vows. These monks lived in rather large monasteries, which were usually attached to temples. The most prominent Kālāmukha monasteries were at Baḷḷigāve (Shimoga District), Śrīśaila (Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh), and Gadaga (Dharwar District). The monastery at Baḷḷigāve was called Kōḍiya or Kēdāra maṭha. It was a centre of learning where many disciplines were studied at a high level: including logic, religious doctrine, yoga, law, and arts. Baḷḷigāve was the place of the temple of Dakṣiṇa Kēdārēśvara: Śiva as Lord of the Southern Kēdāra. This name suggests a relationship with the famous place of pilgrimage named Kēdāra in the Himalayas. Actually, the Kālāmukha school seems to have its origin in Northern India. Several inscriptions refer to the North, notably to Kashmir. Like the Pāśupatas, the Kālāmukhas claimed that their school had been founded by the legendary teacher Lakulīśa (probably second century A.D.). The epigraphical data suggest that the Kālāmukha monasteries in Karnataka flourished between 1070 and 1280. The Kālāmukhas were orthodox Hindus and severe ascetics, likely as a reaction to Tantra mendicants such as the Kāpālikas. The Kālāmukhas mostly claimed the status of Brāhmaṇas; and there is no indication that they questioned the caste system. The people who gained most from their great erudition were, in the first place, Brāhmaṇas; although the inscriptions reveal that there was at least one Kālāmukha sage who preached to anyone who would listen.[6] Normally, instruction in the monasteries of this order was in Sanskrit; and, consequently, only a few people from the higher castes could have been attracted by the teaching.[7]

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[1] Pandurang Vaman KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Poona, 1974, pp. 108-109.

[2] *Manusmṛti* X:1,75-76,80; III:156; IV:99.

[3] S.GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, Mysore, 1974, pp. 189-206; K.R. BASAVARAJA, *History and Culture of Karnataka*, Dharwad, 1984, 540-545; K.N. CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, Poona, 1979, pp. 128-129.

[4] See David N. LORENZEN, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, Berkeley / Los Angeles, 1972.

The Kālāmukhas did not have the monopoly of monastic organization. In former times, there were many influential Buddhist monasteries, vihāras, and although they had already passed their zenith, some of these monasteries still existed in the twelfth century. More important were the numerous Jaina monasteries, basadis, which were, however, engaged more in ascetic practice than in educational activities. There were some Vaiṣṇava monasteries which were centres of learning; although the Śaivas dominated. Among the latter, we find the famous centre at Śṛṅgēri, founded by Śaṅkarācārya, and several monasteries of the Pāśupata school. All the monasteries gathered disciples around their gurus and set up systematic religious instruction. Usually, other branches of

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5. Lorenzen rejects the term 'monastic order' because it would not imply a separate doctrinal or philosophical position. But it could be questioned whether the differences in spirituality and philosophical approach between the Kālāmukhas and the Pāśupatas were greater than those between e.g. Franciscans and Jesuits. At least, the term 'monastic order' is preferable to the terms 'sect' and 'church' which Lorenzen uses both (!) to denote the Kālāmukhas. Cf. LORENZEN, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, p. XI.
6. Bonteyamuni of Hombaḷ, see LORENZEN, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, p. 131.
7. SADYOJATA Swamiji, *Śaiva and Vīraśaiva Maṭhas in Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1974, p. 227. See for the educational activities of the Kālāmukhas and other monastic organizations also G.S. DIKSHIT, 'Social and Religious Conditions of Karnāṭak before Basava', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara:* Eighth Centenary Commemoration Volume, Bangalore, 1967, pp. 117-132.

learning were also studied: such as literature, grammar, astrology, and medicine. But, basically, all teaching had a religious orientation. Indian education was generally characterized by personal relationship between the teacher and his students, who formed together a kind of spiritual family (gurukula). There were two categories of students: the temporary celibate students (upakurvāṇa) and the perpetual celibates (naiṣṭhika brahmacāri). The former were boys from the higher castes who studied for a number of years before they took up the life of a householder. The latter category consisted of men who had taken a vow of lifelong celibacy and who devoted their whole life to study. They always remained in the teacher's company and were expected to be the most loyal servants and supporters of the teacher.[8]

The type of education as practised in the monasteries probably served as a model for all kinds of earlier stages of instruction. There are, however, hardly any data about what would be called in later times primary education. There are indications that the role of Kannaḍa in education became more important during the twelfth century: inscriptions refer sometimes to Kannaḍa teachers and education of children in their mothertongue (karṇāṭabālasikṣe, etc.).[9] It is quite probable that, in many villages, local Brāhmaṇas were active as village teachers; but no suggestion of any kind of mass education is justified.[10] The pupils who received instruction in reading and writing were invariably only boys from the highest castes. Teaching these skills to girls was generally regarded as unnecessary. Similarly, low-caste boys seem to have been completely barred from education; because their duties were expected to concern only manual labour.

So the educational system of medieval Karnataka reached only a limited section of the population. Its most remarkable aspects are the predominant role of religious lore and the teacher's individual approach to his students. Learning was regarded as one of the ways to attain the ultimate liberation of the soul; and teaching was consequently considered to be a meritorious religious act. The most important subject of teaching was constituted by the sacred texts which had to be learnt by heart. The oral transfer of knowledge remained the primary method. Reading was, of course, also practised; but it was always done aloud: so that it still resembled oral instruction. Since all knowledge had to be memorized, much attention was given to classifications and enumerations which were easily to reproduce. The Vīraśaiva movement could thus fall back on a strong tradition of oral instruction. The leaders of the Vīraśaivas used the methods of classical Indian education for their new goal: the dissemination of knowledge among men and women of all castes.

[8] GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, pp. 183-184.

[9] BASAVARAJA, *History and Culture of Karnataka*, p. 538; GURURAJACHAR, *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karṇāṭaka*, p. 209.

[10] DIKSHIT, 'Social and Religious Conditions of Karnāṭak before Basava', in: *Śrī Basavēśvara*, p. 129; CHITNIS, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Medieval India*, p. 118.

The Twelfth Century - Vacanas as an Instrument of Religious Education

The Vīraśaiva vacanakāras aimed with their poetry at a spiritual awakening of the masses. The message of the little poems is clear and often very practical. Metaphors were taken from everyday life: and it is noteworthy that even elements of the culture of the lowest castes found a place in the figurative language of the vacanas. Since Vīraśaivism was a popular movement, the texts were not shaped with the help of the classical metrical rules as they were developed in the world of temples and court. However, the vacanas have their own rhythm, characterized by parallelisms and repetitions, and similar figures of speech. Vacanas should be memorized: particularly by those who were not able to read. Therefore, these compositions are mostly rather short and easy to divide into small lines. Apparently, vacanas were not composed for artistic reasons, but as an instrument of education. Their aesthetic value is not intended and vacanas are hence rightly described as 'a literature in spite of itself'.[11]

The function of vacanas as an instrument of religious instruction could be illustrated by innumerable examples; but it would be impossible to ignore one of Basava's vacanas, which has become the most famous Vīraśaiva text.

Uḷḷavaru Śivālaya māḍuvaru;
nānēna māḍuve baḍavanayyā.
Enna kāle kambha, dēhave dēgula,
śirave honnakalaśavayyā.
Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā, kēḷayyā
sthāvarakkaḷivunṭu, jaṅgamakkaḷivilla.[12]

The rich are building temples for Śiva,
but what can I build, being poor?
My legs are pillars,
my body a shrine,
my head a cupola of gold.
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers, listen:
what is static, that will fall,
but what is dynamic, that will stay.

The text is quoted in many publications about Vīraśaivism; and that is quite justified; because we find in this small, beautiful vacana several elements which are essential to the Vīraśaiva way of thinking. In the first place, there is the contrast between rich and poor. The vacana is apparently addressed to people who recognize themselves in the attitude of the poor man who wonders what his contribution to worship could be. He belongs, like the majority of Basava's audience, to those who are not able to express their piety by founding and adorning temples: they are not 'the rich'. However, poor people have their own means of worshipping God. The rich seem to be the only true devotees because of their generosity and support of public worship; but the contribution of the poor can be more fundamental, as they have only themselves to offer. That is the second element in the vacana that is typical of Vīraśaiva devotion: the conviction that true devotion is not characterized by outward acts of piety like gifts to temples but by an existential surrender to God. What matters in religion is not building or making, but being. Thus, poor people can have their own, personal devotion; and, perhaps, they are even in a better position to develop such devotion because they are not impeded by material circumstances. Since they are not able to build temples, they are more inclined to offer the only thing they have: their own life. Basava illustrates this with an interesting simile; and that example of figurative language is again typically Vīraśaiva. The body of the poor devotee has become a temple. The image, also known in Christianity[13] is particularly strong in an Indian setting. In India, temples were built in the form of a human body: the inner sanctum is called the womb (garbhagṛha); the two sides are called hands; the doors can be compared with the senses, etcetera. With this image, Basava makes clear that the real temple is not a building of stone, but a living being. Human life, even that of poor people, is sanctified by true devotion: legs become temple pillars, the body a shrine, the head a golden cupola. This living temple is much better than the petrified temple bodies that are erected by the rich; because the original idea of a temple is nothing else than human life. Finally, Basava gives a conclusion of his vacana which expresses the fundamental Vīraśaiva conviction of the priority of dynamism. He opposes two concepts, 'sthāvara' and 'jaṅgama'. The former indicates everything which is standing, fixed, or static, including the temples of stone and the stone images of the liṅga in it. Jaṅgama, on the contrary, means moving, and the term refers in Vīraśaivism particularly to the religious mendicant who has become the embodiment of the divine, often described as a moving liṅga. The usual conviction is that the temples are imperishable because they are cut out in the rocks or constructed with stones; whilst everything moving, especially a human being, is subject to transitoriness and mortality. The revolutionary idea of the Vīraśaiva vacanakāras is that this opposition must be turned upside down. The static temples are not everlasting; but the dynamic human life, as a place of divine indwelling, has eternal value. What is static will perish; but the dynamic ways of the divine liṅga will continue forever. There is therefore a legitimate place for change and innovation in Vīraśaiva perception. True devotion is not marked by conservation of the past, but by moving to the future. Consequently, the jaṅgama, the moving liṅga, has become in Vīraśaivism the one who has to be venerated above all. This priority of dynamism, as opposed to static values, can be found throughout the work of Basava.[14] The vacana quoted above is, however, doubtlessly one of the most powerful expressions of the dynamic spirit of Vīraśaivism. It demonstrates clearly how ordinary people were stimulated by the vacanakāras to practise devotion in a new, revolutionary way.

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[11] A.K. RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 12.

[12] BASAVA, 820 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 274; ARYA, p. 86; ANANTHANARAYANA, p. 30; BASAWANAL, SRINIVASA IYENGAR, p. 77; HILL, PRABHU SHANKARA, *Naming the Nameless*, p. 57; IYENGAR, p. 18; MAHESH, OLLIVIER, p. 62; RAMANUJAN, *Speaking of Śiva*, p. 88; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 264; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 36; UMASHANKAR, p. 42; ZVELEBIL, p. 102). RAMANUJAN gives an elucidating commentary on this vacana, o.c., pp. 19-22.

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[13] In the *Bible* e.g. I Corinthians 6:19.

[14] See especially BASAVA 194, 381, 398, 418, 423, 424, 522, 823, 824.

The vacana authors tried with their texts to provide their followers, and thus the masses, with useful religious knowledge. In many vacanas, they turn against the classical suppliers of religious knowledge, the Brāhmaṇas. Especially the elitist attitude of the Brāhmaṇas, who kept the knowledge to themselves, is attacked by the Vīraśaivas. Likewise, they question the value of that formal Brāhmaṇa lore which seems to be profound but is incapable of equipping people for the actual practice of life. An interesting vacana on this theme is the following text of Basava.

Nūr̤anōdi nūr̤a kēḷidaḍēnu?
Āse har̤iyadu, rōṣa biḍadu.
Majjanakker̤edu phalavēnu?
Mātinante manavillada jāti ḍombara nōḍi
naguva namma Kūḍalasaṅgamadēva.[15]
What if you read a hundred texts,
what if you listen to a hundred ones?
Desire does not go away and anger does not disappear.
What is the effect of taking a bath?
Seeing the born clowns,
whose minds are not like their words,
the Lord of the Meeting Rivers laughs!

The vacana contains a severe criticism of the Brāhmaṇa way of life. The importance of reading the sacred texts, the foremost activity of the Brāhmaṇa priests, is questioned. According to Basava, it is of no avail to read a hundred texts or to listen to them. Reading and hearing are connected: for the sacred texts were not read silently but they were recited aloud, mostly in front of an audience. Both the act of reciting and the act of listening were considered to be meritorious in Brāhmaṇa circles; but the Vīraśaiva vacanakāras did not appreciate that practice very much. Basava compares in another vacana the reciting of the Brāhmaṇas with the meaningless uttering of sounds by a parrot:

.....
Ōdittu kāṇirō śukanu Śivajñānavanar̤iyadannakka. .....[16]
.....

Look: a parrot is reciting, not having any knowledge of Śiva. .....
In the vacana quoted earlier, Basava attacks likewise the reading Brāhmaṇas and their high-caste audience. This formal reciting of texts is useless; because it remains an outward activity and it does not change the mentality of reader and hearers. Desire and other dangerous passions like anger are not dealt with. Also the Brāhmaṇa scrupulosity with regard to ritual bathing is criticized. Basava asks again what the use of such habits is; and, with this question, he teaches his followers not to be impressed by the seemingly devotional attitude of the Brāhmaṇas. The poem is again directed to low-caste people who always learned to revere the Brāhmaṇas as the guards of spiritual knowledge. Basava

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15. BASAVA, 651 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 215; IYENGAR, p. 55).
16. BASAVA, 143 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 47).

rejects the pretensions of the Brāhmaṇas and ridicules them. The final lines of the vacana have a very insulting character. He compares the highly revered priests, holding the topposition in the caste structure, with the very low caste of clowns and buffoons, who just set people off laughing. The reciting Brāhmaṇas might be revered by the people; but at least God has to laugh about them because their pious words are not in accordance with their passioned minds. Other vacanakāras also express their criticism of the teaching of the Brāhmaṇas which deals with formal and superficial matters and does not give relevant knowledge. In many vacanas, it is demonstrated that there is a contrast between the useless Brāhmaṇa education and the existential teaching of the Vīraśaiva movement. So Siddharāma wrote an interesting vacana about the two sorts of religious knowledge.

> Tiḷinīrembe tiḷinīrembe,
> tiḷi nī endu ondu dina endillele mānavā.
> Kṣaṇakke kṣaṇakke tiḷi nī endaḍe,
> taḷuhade tanna nijava koḍane Kapilasiddhamallēndra?[17]

> 'Clean water', you say, 'clean water',
> but 'know yourself' you have never said once, O man.
> If you would say every moment 'know yourself',
> will *the Eminent Lord of the Jasmines* not surely
> give Himself to you?

The poem is composed round a pun on the words 'tiḷi nīru' and 'tiḷi nī'. The former means 'clean, ritually pure water'; and it serves as a characterization of the Brāhmaṇa meticulousness concerning cleaning and bathing. That term is always on their lips, since their whole ideology centres around ritual purity. But, for Siddharāma, real knowledge is quite different. It could be indicated with the other term, which means 'know yourself'; because only self-knowledge can lead one to the final liberation. If someone is constantly saying to himself 'know yourself', God will be moved and will make him share in the divine existence. However, people who are obsessed by scrupulous protection of their purity will not be able to attain that liberation; because there is no room left in their lives for developing the indispensable self-knowledge. In this way, Siddharāma depicts Brāhmaṇa piety as a dangerous system which keeps people from the true way of liberation. The vacana is a pithy expression of the Vīraśaiva criticism of the traditional religious education of the Brāhmaṇas. Not purity but self-knowledge is preached by the Vīraśaiva teachers; and, as a result, not only the upper sections of the society are addressed but the masses as well. The popularization of religious education becomes obvious in this and many other vacanas.

The Twelfth Century - Vacanas as an Instrument of Moral Instruction

If self-knowledge is such an integral part of religious life, it could be expected that moral teaching would play a vital role in the movement. Indeed, the Vīraśaiva vacanakāras devoted much attention to the development of moral values among their followers. Again, the vacanas are the main method to educate the people in this domain. The shorter poems formed the appropriate means to teach people their duties and

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17. SIDDHARĀMA, 141 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 49; H. THIPPERUDRA SWAMY, *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, Mysore, 1968, p. 299).

warn them of errors. If we realize that the vacanas were to become the main content of education for many centuries,[18] it is obvious that this literature had an enormous influence on the moral education of the community. Several vacanas can give us a clear picture of the ethics of the Vīraśaiva authors and their method of impressing moral values on their followers. The vacanakāras used especially figures of speech such as repetition and enumeration to pass on moral knowledge to the masses. The following vacana of Basava is a good example.

> Kaḷabēḍa, kolabēḍa, husiya nuḍiyalu bēḍa;
> muniyabēḍa, anyarige asəhyabaḍabēḍa,
> tanna baṇṇisabēḍa, idira haḷiyalu bēḍa,
> idē antaraṅgaśuddhi, idē bahiraṅgaśuddhi,
> idē namma Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvaranolisuva paṛi.[19]

> You shall not steal,
> you shall not kill,
> you shall not speak lies;
> you shall not get angry,
> you shall not be intolerant to others;
> you shall not praise yourself,
> you shall not blame your rivals.
> This is your inner purity and this is your outward purity,
> this is the way to please *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers.*

This vacana is often compared with the Ten Commandments in the Jewish-Christian tradition; and there is indeed a striking similarity. However, the scope is different in one important aspect; because Basava's seven commandments are not intended to structure the life of a people within a divine covenant, but to redefine individual purity. Basava wants to make clear that true purity is not determined by ritual rules but only by a moral attitude towards one's fellow men. He stresses in his vacana that only such an attitude makes out one's inner purity and even one's outward purity. There is no scope for a ritual concept of purity as it was found in the Brāhmaṇa tradition. In that tradition, outward purity was the basis of all purity: man had to follow first of all the ritual rules which made life pure. Inward purity was dependent upon that outward purity. Basava, however, gives all priority to man's mentality, the inner purity which governs all aspects of life: including questions of outward purity. The moral attitude, which Basava has in mind, is described in seven rules. The first three rules refer to acts which are invariably seen as the opposite of righteousness, dharma. Theft, murder, and falsehood are thus condemned. Then follow two rules that have to do with passion in oneself and towards others. One should not fly into passions; and anger especially should be avoided: as well as an intolerant, scornful attitude towards one's neighbours. Finally, two rules are formulated about one's judgement of oneself and others. One should not raise oneself above others by glorying in oneself,

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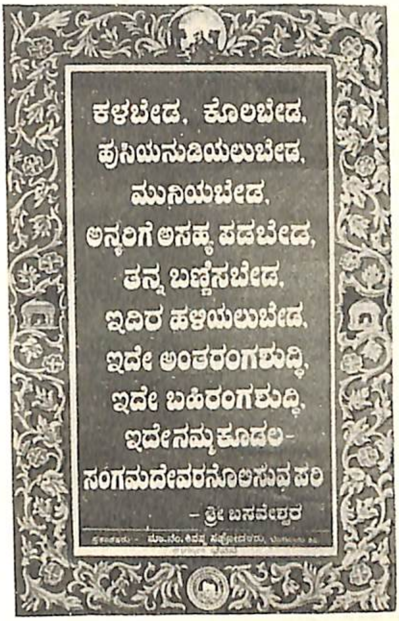
18. G. SHIVARUDRAPPA, *Contributions of Veerashaiva Mathas to the Development of Education in Karnatak*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Mysore, 1974, p. 330.
19. BASAVA, 235 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 77; ARYA, p. 36; IYENGAR, p. 14; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 136; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 68; UMASHANKAR, pp. 23-24; ZVELEBIL, p. 46). See fig. 12.



ಕಳಬೇಡ, ಕೊಲಬೇಡ,
ಹುಸಿಯನುಡಿಯಲುಬೇಡ,
ಮುನಿಯಬೇಡ,
ಅನ್ಯರಿಗೆ ಅಸಹ್ಯ ಪಡಬೇಡ,
ತನ್ನ ಬಣ್ಣಿಸಬೇಡ,
ಇದಿರ ಹಳಿಯಲುಬೇಡ,
ಇದೇ ಅಂತರಂಗಶುದ್ಧಿ,
ಇದೇ ಬಹಿರಂಗಶುದ್ಧಿ,
ಇದೇನಮ್ಮ ಕೂಡಲ-
ಸಂಗಮದೇವರನೊಲಿಸುವ ಪರಿ
– ಶ್ರೀ ಬಸವೇಶ್ವರ

12. Poster with Basava's vacana no. 235

13. The 24th pontiff of the principal virakta monastery at Chitradurga: Śrīman Mahārāja Nirañjana Jagadguru Jayadēva Murughārājēndra Mahāsvāmi (in function: 1903–1956) *Photo about 1930*

14. Śri Śivakumāra Svāmīji of Siddhagaṅgā maṭha near Tumkur (in function since 1941) *Photo about 1960* nor humiliate one's opponents by blaming or ridiculing them. With these seven moral rules, Basava sketches the way to please God; and he formulates them in an impressing manner, so that they can be easily memorized by the illiterate masses, for whom they are meant in the first place. This vacana has gained an enormous popularity in the Vīraśaiva community. It is quoted innumerable times and recited on many occasions, and it is reproduced in various ways as a typical example of Vīraśaiva moral teaching.[20]

Likewise very influential became an arrangement of five principles of conduct, called pañcācāra, which we find for the first time in the vacanas of Basava's nephew, Cannabasava. He turned out to be the great systematist of Vīraśaiva teachings and his vacanas often display many kinds of classifications and enumerations. The five principles of conduct are described in several of his vacanas, of which the following text is a good example.

Liṅgācāra sadācāra Śivācāra gaṇācāra bhṛtyācāravemba
pañcācārada ācaraṇeyentendaḍe:
liṅgavallade anyavanar̤iyadihude liṅgācāra.
Sajjana kāyakadalli tandu guru liṅga jaṅgamakke nīḍi,
satya śuddhanāgihude sadācāra.
Śivabhaktaralli kula gōtra jāti varṇāśrayavanar̤asade
avarokkuḍa kombude Śivācāra.
Śivācārada nindeya kēḷadihude gaṇācāra.
Śivaśaraṇare hiriyarāgi tāne kir̤iyanāgi,
bhayabhaktiyinda ācarisuvude bhṛtyācāra.
Intī pañcācāravuḷḷa bhaktara okkudanikki salahayyā,
Prabhuve, Kūḍalacannasaṅgamadēvā.[21]

If it is asked how the observance of the five principles of conduct is,
namely 'liṅgācāra', 'sadācāra', 'Śivācāra', 'gaṇācāra', and 'bhṛtyācāra':
'liṅgācāra' is: not knowing another [deity] than liṅga.
'Sadācāra' is: to become honest and pure
by presenting gifts from virtuous labour to father, teacher, liṅga, and jaṅgama.
'Śivācāra' is: taking even inferior leftovers
without inquiring after family, lineage, caste, or community among the devotees of Śiva.
'Gaṇācāra' is: not listening to slander about Śiva's principles of conduct.
'Bhṛtyācāra' is: to be observant with respect and devotion,
so that one is a junior, and Śiva's devotees are the seniors.
Thus being the five principles of conduct,
feed me, O Lord, serving me the leftovers of the devotees,
Lord of the Lovely Confluence.

The vacana gives a clear explanation of the five principles of conduct. The first principle is, of course, a positive attitude towards liṅga: liṅgācāra. This rule prescribes a strict henotheism: no other deity is recognized next to the sacred symbol of Śiva. The existence of other

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20. See fig. 12.
21. CANNABASAVA, 1159.

gods is not explicitly denied, but for the devotee, there is only one object of worship: the liṅga. This worship excludes other forms of religious adoration. Śiva is thus exalted above all other divinities. And it is remarkable that Śiva is not presented to the devotee in the colourful fashion of mythological imagination, but in the abstract form of the liṅga. We can clearly observe here the tendency towards a more rational, monotheistic religion, which distinguishes Vīraśaivism, although a popular movement, from the usual Hindu folk religion. The second of the five principles is sadācāra: the attitude of honesty. The principle of sadācāra prescribes that the devotee perform labour and present the earnings as a gift to the head of the family, as well as to guru, liṅga, and jaṅgama. Here, we find the concepts of kāyaka and dāsōha: work and service.[22] It is telling that this principle holds the second place, just behind the principle of liṅga-worship. It reveals the close connection in the Vīraśaiva tradition between spiritual acts and secular activities, worship and work. This principle emphasizes that worship is the most important but must be followed immediately by work and service. The three following principles do not always stand in the same sequence; but Cannabasava's order is rather common. He mentions, in the vacana quoted above, as the third principle Śivācāra, which refers to the new relationships because of Śiva. If Śiva is recognized as the only godhead, his devotees form a kind of family in which a new code of behaviour is practised. Traditional distinctions on the basis of pollution disappear through the common experience of Śiva's purifying grace. Therefore, all barriers between Śiva devotees have to be removed. Cannabasava illustrates this with an example that is very radical in a Hindu setting. People who belong to the spiritual family of Śiva have to accept all leftovers from each other. Remnants of meals were considered to be extremely polluting; and it was unthinkable that one would eat the leftovers of someone who belonged to a lower caste. But Śivācāra forbids any distinctions among the devotees concerning caste and family: and thus no pollution should be feared.[23] Then, there is the principle of gaṇācāra: one's attitude towards the flock. This principle aims at a strong loyalty towards one's own tradition and community. Especially slander of the Śaiva lore is condemned; and devotees should dissociate themselves from people who indulge in such objectionable practices. Finally, the principle of bhṛtyācāra is given, which means the attitude of a servant. This principle teaches the devotees humility: they have to regard the other devotees as superior and to behave themselves like servants. Respect and devotion must determine the spirit in which people live in the Vīraśaiva community.

In these five principles of conduct, pañcācāra, Cannabasava instructs the people who joined the Vīraśaiva movement; and he teaches them a clear and well-defined morality. His moral instruction has become a vital part of the Vīraśaiva teachings.[24] The pañcācāra obtained a regular place in the Vīraśaiva writings, both in the Kannaḍa and in the Sanskrit tradition. An example from the latter is found in one of the Āgamas, the Candrajñānāgama, in a part which was most probably written under Vīraśaiva influence.[25] Here, we find the same concepts as in Cannabasava's vacana, and even in almost the same order:

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[22] See chapter 2.

[23] See chapter 1, especially pages 33-37.

[24] M.R. SAKHARE, *History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion*, Dharwad, 1978, pp. 328-330; S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 48-49; H.P. MALLEDEVARU, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, Bombay, 1973, p. 73; S.M. HUNASHAL, *The Veerashaiva Social Philosophy*, Raichur, 1957, pp. 26-30.

> Liṅgācāraḥ sadācāraḥ Śivācārastathaiva ca |
> bhṛtyācāro gaṇācāraḥ pañcācāraḥ prakīrtitāḥ ||[26]
> The five principles of conduct are called thus:
> attitude to liṅga, attitude of honesty, attitude concerning Śiva,
> servant's attitude, and attitude towards the flock.

The pañcācāra is not the only concept expressing morality in the Vīraśaiva tradition. Notably the vacanas of Cannabasava contain several classifications of virtues and enumerations of duties. He wrote, for instance, a very long vacana in which the pañcācāra is explained in detail, together with another series of seven principles of conduct, the saptācāra.[27] The latter includes performing the right rituals (kriyācāra), obtaining the knowledge of right conduct (jñānācāra), cultivating the right emotions and motives (bhāvācāra), defending the truth (satyācāra), developing a spirit of renouncement (nityācāra), practising religion (dharmācāra), and striving for the ultimate liberation (sarvācāra). In the previous chapter, reference was already made to the vacana of Cannabasava in which fifty commandments are enumerated.[28] The list starts with the ban on desiring another's wife, followed by the adhortations not to steal, not to lie or betray, and not to kill. Then comes a long series of prescriptions mainly aimed at a right attitude towards Śiva and a strong loyalty to the community of śaraṇas. It ends with the duty to make others act rightly like oneself, and finally, to carry these fifty principles of conduct to the end. These texts show the great significance which the Vīraśaiva teachers attached to the moral instruction of the masses. Many vacanakāras attempted in this way to promote morality and to strengthen the community.

The Twelfth Century - Teachers and Pupils in the Vacanas

Vacanas are the instruments of religious and moral instruction, as we have seen. But, in the vacana literature, we can also find ideas about instruction. Many texts of the vacanakāras give an impression of the way in which the education of the Vīraśaiva devotees took place. Vīra-

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25. About the Āgama literature: S.C. NANDIMATH, 'The Śaivāgamas: Their Literature and Theology', *Journal of the Karn. Univ. - Humanities*, Vol. VI, 1962, pp. 1-34, Vol. VII, 1963, pp. 1-48; Jan GONDA, *Medieval Religious Literature in Sanskrit*, Wiesbaden, 1977, pp. 163-215; Surendranath DASGUPTA, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. V, Cambridge, 1962, pp. 20-41. Dating the Āgamas is almost impossible. The oldest parts may go back to the fifth century; but, during history, many schools of thought, including Vīraśaivism, made contributions to the Āgama literature. Some parts of the Āgamas are definitely written under Vīraśaiva influence, probably between the thirteenth and sixteenth century.
26. *Candrajñānāgama*, Kriyāpāda, paṭala IX, st. 4, quoted by MALLEDEVARU, *Essentials of Vīraśaivism*, p. 89.
27. CANNABASAVA, 1378 (cf. R.C. HIREMATH, *Sri Channabasavesvara*, Dharwar, 1978, pp. 79-81).
28. CANNABASAVA, 105, see page 154.

śaivism followed the classical structure of education in which the religious teacher, the guru, held a most exalted place. However, new situations require new relations; and the Vīraśaiva authors indicate that the position of the teacher in the new setting is different from earlier times. There is an interesting vacana on this theme, written by the author who became the guru par excellence in Vīraśaivism: Allama.

> Kṛtayugadalli śrīguru śiṣyaṅge baḍidu buddhiya kalisidaḍe,
> āgali, mahāprasādavendenayyā.
> Trētāyugadalli śrīguru śiṣyaṅge baidu buddhiya kalisidaḍe
> āgali, mahāprasādavendenayyā.
> Dvāparadalli śrīguru śiṣyaṅge jaṅkisi buddhiya kalisidaḍe
> āgali, mahāprasādavendenayyā.
> Kaliyugadalli śrīguru śiṣyaṅge vandisi buddhiya kalisidaḍe
> āgali, mahāprasādavendenayyā.
> Guhēśvarā nimma kālada kaṭṭaḷeya kalitanakke
> nānu beṟagādenu.[29]

> When in the Kṛta age the teacher taught the pupil wisdom
> by beating him,
> then I said: 'Great grace!'
> When in the Trētā age the teacher taught the pupil wisdom
> by abusing him,
> then I said: 'Great grace!'
> When in the Dvāpara age the teacher taught the pupil wisdom
> by scolding him,
> then I said: 'Great grace!'
> When in the Kali age the teacher taught the pupil wisdom
> by praising him,
> then I said: 'Great grace!'
> *O Lord of the Caves*, I was astonished about the vigour
> of time's command.

The vacana is based on the classical Hindu speculations about the ages of the world (yuga), which are especially worked out in the Mahābhārata and the Viṣṇupurāṇa.[30] The names of these four ages are derived from an old Indian game of dice. The elongated dice had four playing sides: marked respectively with four, three, two and one dot, and named 'kṛta', perfect, 'trētā', threesome, 'dvāpara', twofold, and 'kali', misfortune. The four ages with those names represent a similar downward order. The first age of Kṛta is the golden age in which life is characterized by prosperity and perfect devotion to duty (dharma). Then comes the age of Trētā in which duty is declining, followed by the Dvāpara age when duty is only halfway practised. And finally, there is the present age of Kali, the age of vice. The ages were regarded as very long periods. The cycle of four ages comprised originally 12,000 years, but in later calculation, these years were considered to be divine years, each of 360 normal years, which made a complete cycle extend to not less than

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29. ALLAMA, 52 (cf. PURANIK, no. 19).
30. *Mahābhārata* III:186:17-64; *Viṣṇupurāṇa* I:3. See Louis RENOU, Jean FILLIOZAT, *L'Inde classique*, t. 1, Paris/Hanoi, 1947, pp. 398-399, t. 2, Paris/Hanoi, 1953, p. 186.

4,320,000 years.[31] Allama uses yuga speculation to reveal a degeneration with regard to the method of education. In the golden age, the position of the teacher was so high and unquestioned that he could allow himself to beat his pupils. And even such teaching a lesson was considered to be most graceful. But in later ages, when dharma declined, the teacher was forced to spare his pupils more and more, so that only abusing and scolding could be used to correct the pupils. The teacher is thus descending to the pupil's level during the ages. Finally, in the present age, his position has become so humble that he even has to praise his pupils in order to transfer his wisdom to them. Time's command is so strong that the method of education has to be adjusted in new circumstances. The Vīraśaiva teachers seem to be well aware of that truth.

We could get the impression from Allama's words that the teacher had lost all esteem in Vīraśaivism; but that is certainly not true. Several vacanas demonstrate that the role of the teacher was regarded as indispensable and he was honoured accordingly. In a vacana of Siddharāma, it is said:

> Śiṣyana bhāva baliyuva kārya guruvinupadēśadindallade,
> tanna tānar̤iya.
> Dīpa svaprakāśavādaḍēnu, prajvalipa puruṣaniṣṭhebēku.
> Idu kāraṇa, śiṣyaninda guru, guruvininda śiṣya.
> Idar̤a bhēda guru Kapilasiddhamallikārjunaṅgar̤iyabahudallade,
> bhavabhārigentu prabhuve?[32]

If the pupil's personality is not growing through the instruction of a teacher,
he does not come to know himself.
If the lamp is to shine by its own light,
it needs to be lighted by human touch.
Therefore, the teacher needs a pupil,
and the pupil needs a teacher.
The distinction between those, O Lord,
how can it be known by those who bear worldly existence,
if it is only to be known by the Teacher,
the Eminent Lord of the Jasmines?

Siddharāma expresses in this vacana the necessity of instruction by a teacher: a guru. It is indispensable; because, the pupil comes to know himself only through instruction. The author compares this with a lamp that has to shine by itself, but has to be lit first by human hands. Similarly, a teacher is required to set the process in motion which brings the pupil to self-knowledge. The simile suggests that particularly the beginning of the teaching period is meant. On this occasion, the teacher initiates his pupil by laying his hand on the pupil's head and giving him a sacred formula: a mantra. Just as the hand makes a lamp shine, so it brings a pupil to knowledge. Therefore, it is said that teacher and pupil need each other. The process of education can be started only if both come together. This is described as a secret which God alone can comprehend: worldly people will never be able to grasp the significance of this initiation and instruction.

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[31] The length of the individual yuga was considered to be directly proportional to its value: for the Kṛta 4000 (divine) years preceded by a dawn of 400 years and concluded with a twilight period of again 400 years; for the Trētā, these numbers were 300 + 3000 + 300, for the Dvāpara 200 + 2000 + 200, and for the Kali age 100 + 1000 + 100.

[32] SIDDHARĀMA, 761 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 287).

However, the guru is not anymore the sole agent of teaching, according to the vacana authors. The special character of Vīraśaivism as a popular devotional movement determined also the way in which knowledge was handed on. Not only the guru but the community as a whole got a function in this process as well. Basava hints at this in the following vacana.

> Maḍakeya māḍuvaḍe maṇṇe modalu;
> toḍigeya māḍuvaḍe honne modalu;
> Śivapathavaṇar̤ivaḍe gurupathave modalu.
> Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvaranar̤ivade
> śaraṇara saṅgave modalu.[33]

In making a pot, clay comes first.
In making an ornament, gold comes first.
In knowing the way of Śiva, the teacher's way comes first.
In knowing *the Lord of the Meeting Rivers*,
the community of devotees comes first.

Two metaphors are used in order to illustrate priority in a process. When making pots, one starts with the essential material: clay. Likewise, the making of ornaments starts with taking gold. Similarly, there is a priority in the mystical process. It is expressed in the vacana by two statements. The first one is in conformity with the classical Indian concept of religious education: amassing knowledge about the path of God starts with knowledge of the path of the teacher. Only the guru can show the divine ways. However, the second statement fits more in a popular movement of devotion (bhakti). Not the guru but the fellowship of devotees comes first if one wants to become acquainted with the Lord of the Meeting Rivers. But this Lord is no one else than Śiva whose path could only be known with the help of a guru. So it is clear that there is a certain tension between the two statements. This tension is typical of the Vīraśaiva movement. On the one hand, it wanted to acknowledge the spiritual experiences of ordinary people; but, on the other hand, it did not want to discard the tradition of the gurus. The sense of equality went not so far that the special role of religious experts was abolished. Gurus were still held in esteem in the Vīraśaiva movement. In the first place, their own leaders were regarded as gurus in the classical sense: notably Basava, Cannabasava, and Allama are often called gurus in the vacana literature. But there were other gurus as well: for it seems that not all ties with the teachers of the other Śaiva schools, in particular the Kālāmukhas, were severed. In the vacana literature, there are many references to the Kālāmukha centre of pilgrimage Śrīśaila, notably in the vacanas of Siddharāma and Akka Mahādēvi.[34]

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33. BASAVA, 70 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 24; IYENGAR, p. 42; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, pp. 37, 243; UMASHANKAR, p. 9).
34. See SIDDHARĀMA 200, 576, 731, 779, 814, 815; AKKA, 63, 68, 82, 122, 171, 174, 283, 284, 335, 337; ALLAMA, 1196; BASAVA, 394.

Both had a special devotion for Śiva as he was worshipped at Śriśaila: Mallikārjuna; and they use that name in the devotional signatures (mudrike) of their vacanas. The Vīraśaiva leaders did not disown the gurus to whom they owed their own initiation. Later history shows that the majority of the monastic institutions of the other Śaiva schools was gradually taken over by the Vīraśaivas. However, the gurus did not hold the position of the highest spiritual authority as in the older schools. The jaṅgamas occupied the highest place in the religious hierarchy; because they were considered to be incarnations of the Liṅga.[35] And the fellowship of devotees also acquired an authoritative position: as the community in which spiritual experiences could be exchanged and discussed. The most remarkable expression of this position was the spiritual assembly of the Kalyāṇa 'Hall of Religious Experience': Anubhava Maṇṭapa. Devotees of different background, jaṅgamas and householders, Brāhmaṇas and untouchables, joined the assembly and made their contributions to the discussion about religion. This institution demonstrates that the Vīraśaiva movement was essentially directed towards popular education.

The Twelfth Century - Concluding Remarks

The vacana literature provides ample evidence that the Vīraśaiva movement laid great stress on the education of the masses. This type of poetry was chosen because it could function as a medium of education. Most vacanas were composed in the simple language of everyday life, using abundantly metaphors that were recognizable for everybody. The short verses with their many repetitions could easily be memorized, even by illiterate people. Many of these poems were apparently intended to have a function in religious and moral instruction. The vacanas reveal a way of devotion which could be practised even by poor and illiterate people. The religious life of the high-caste tradition is rejected; and devotees are taught that a dynamic form of personal religion is more enduring than the cult of stone temples. Similarly, the knowledge of the Brāhmaṇas is criticized because it deals with formal and superficial matters. Self-knowledge is more highly esteemed by the Vīraśaiva vacanakāras than all the ritual prescriptions on purity.

Especially moral admonition had an important place in Vīraśaiva education. The vacanakāras tried to teach their followers a way of life in conformity with religious principles. This gave rise to an impressing systematization and classification of moral categories and prescriptions. Basava's vacana with the seven commandments and Cannabasava's explanations of the five rules of conduct (pañcācāra) are good examples of this type of educational literature, which became very popular. Apparently, this moral instruction was an essential part of the building up of the new community, consisting of people with such different cultural backgrounds.

The vacana literature not only reveals the content of education, it also gives some idea of its method. An important person was, as in the earlier Śaiva schools, the religious teacher: the guru. He was held in great esteem by the vacanakāras; but he did not obtain the top position in the religious hierarchy, which was reserved for the mendicant: the jaṅgama. And the guru was no longer the sole authority in religious discourse; but the fellowship of devotees became an authority as well. The almost democratic way in which all devotees could participate in the religious discussions in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience' is characteristic of the new circumstances. However, this development implied also a certain tension of which we find the marks already in the vacana literature. The vacanakāras attempted to give a legitimate place to the spiritual experiences of ordinary people; but, at the same time, they wanted to retain contact with the Śaiva tradition of gurus. That combination turned out to be a troublesome factor in Vīraśaiva history.

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[35] See e.g. BASAVA, 187, 415, 420, 424, 823, 839. Cf. SADYOJATA Swamiji, *Śaiva and Vīraśaiva Maṭhas in Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1974, pp. 226-227, 230-231.

The Fifteenth Century - Śūnyasampādane

The Śūnyasampādane represents a quite different social environment compared with the twelfth century vacana literature. Whereas the latter had its roots in the popular movement of early Vīraśaivism, the Śūnyasampādane is a product of the fifteenth century revival of Vīraśaivism which was largely encouraged by the upper strata of the society. This revival took place in the days of the Vijayanagara empire, the Hindu response to the threatening islamization of Southern India. Some ministers of the great king Prauḍhadēvarāya II (ca. 1426-1446) belonged to the Vīraśaiva community, notably Lakkaṇṇa Daṇḍēśa and Jakkaṇārya. They gave considerable patronage to their community.[36] However, unlike their great predecessor Basava, they were more oriented towards intellectual circles than to the masses. Both were themselves authors of Vīraśaiva philosophical and mythological books. Likewise, they stimulated other authors and patronized many projects which aimed at the propagation of the Vīraśaiva doctrine. The most famous works with this background were Māyidēva's philosophical treatise in Sanskrit: the Anubhavasūtra, and Cāmarasa's epic on the life of Allama: the Prabhuliṅgalīle. The latter was even read before the king and obtained official approval.[37] A later work, the Prauḍharāyacarita, contains the record of the stories about Śaiva saints which Jakkaṇārya told the king in order to entertain him and to divert his mind from the Brāhmaṇa scriptures.[38] This minister was called, like Basava, the 'treasurer of devotion': bhaktibhaṇḍāri. And it was during these days and in this milieu that the earlier versions of the Śūnyasampādane appeared. The composition reflects the sphere of consolidation and social acceptance which characterized Vīraśaivism under the Vijayanagara rulers. It presents a cultivated form of religion which could find a ready reception in court circles. The social criticism of early Vīraśaivism is almost completely left out; and all emphasis is on the attainment of the mystical union. This position had great implications for the eductional aspect. The text of the Śūnyasampādane was not meant to be memorized like the old vacanas; but it was to be read or

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36. K.A. Nilakanta SASTRI, *A History of South India*, Madras, 1976, pp. 269, 402.
37. S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 25-26; K.R. BASAVARAJA, *History and Culture of Karnataka*, Dharwad, 1984, pp. 571-572.
38. SASTRI, *A History of South India*, p. 402.

recited. Although the composition consists of original vacanas from the initial period of the Vīraśaiva movement, it differs from the literature of that period with respect to both function and content. Since the Śūnyasaṃpādane was not intended to play a role in the education of the masses, the typical educational texts are not included. Practical admonitions and moral teachings hardly find a place in the compilation. Moreover, many vacanas are reinterpreted in order to meet the demands of the new situation.

An interesting example of such reinterpretation is the way in which the concept of the guru is worked out in the Śūnyasaṃpādane. Early Vīraśaivism held the religious teacher in esteem, so that the bonds with the classical Śaiva tradition were not completely severed. However, another religious person, the mendicant or jaṅgama, was given the highest position in the hierarchy. Some of the texts about the pre-eminence of the jaṅgama were also admitted into the Śūnyasaṃpādane; but it was the guru who became, in fact, the main religious dignitary. And, in particular, one of the saints stands out above all others as the guru par excellence: Allama Prabhu. Although he was portrayed in the early Vīraśaiva literature as a yogi and a jaṅgama, he became, in the Śūnyasaṃpādane, a guru as in the usual Śaiva tradition. Not his renouncement and homelessness are stressed but his elevation as a religious teacher. Remarkable is the way in which his arrival at Kalyāṇa is described: especially in comparison with the treatment of the same theme in the thirteenth century Basavapurāṇamu.[39] The latter tells the story as centered round Basava. Allama is portrayed as an ascetic expert, the lord of yogis. Basava is at first sight convinced of his greatness in this respect, 'acting like a merchant who knows gems and accepts only the good ones'; and he honours Allama, serves him an abundant meal and is even prepared to give his own body as food. Allama then expresses his gratitude and admiration for Basava's devotion and delivers a long eulogy in praise of him. In the Śūnyasaṃpādane, however, it is Allama who receives all the praise. Basava is portrayed as absorbed in liṅga-worship and unable to recognize the importance of the arrival of such a living divinity, as Allama is in the eyes of the authors. It is regarded as a serious fault that Basava does not want to interrupt his worship and only sends his servant Appaṇṇa to welcome the divine visitor. Basava is criticized heavily for this by Allama, who refuses to enter the house of such a man showing no sense of service. Then, Basava realizes his grave transgression and, 'drowned in a sea of fear', he makes weeping his apologies. When, finally, Allama and his companion Siddharāma are appeased, which requires long dialogues, Basava honours Allama with the following words:

> Enna gati mati nīne kaṇḍayyā!
> Enna guru paramaguru nīne kaṇḍayyā!
> Enna antaraṅgada jyōti nīne kaṇḍayyā!
> Kūḍalasaṅgamadēvā,
> nīne enage guru, nāne nimma śiṣyanembuda
> nimma śaraṇa Siddharāmayyadēvaru ballaru.
> Kṛpemāḍā Prabhuve.[40]

[39] SŌMANĀTHA, *Basavapurāṇamu* II (trl. pp. 73-75); *Śūnyasaṃpādane* V, XI.

[40] *Śūnyasaṃpādane* V:77 (BASAVA, 1201).

Look, you are my refuge and my desire, O lord!
Look, you are my guru, my supreme guru, O lord!
Look, you are the light of my mind, O lord!
O Lord of the Meeting Rivers,
you are my guru, and I am your pupil, -
your devotee Siddharāma knows this.
Have mercy, O Master!

We do not have to doubt that the first five lines were originally written by Basava. The following two lines seem to have been adapted or created by the composers of the Śūnyasampādane. It is not quite unthinkable that these lines stem also from the original vacana; but, in that case, 'Prabhu' will have denoted God and the reference to Siddharāma is strange. On the other hand, this reference fits well in the narrative of the Śūnyasampādane and, since the prose text generally calls Allama 'Prabhu', that term stresses that not God but Allama is adressed here. The use of this vacana is an example of a radical reinterpretation. Whereas Basava expressed in the original poem his devotion to the Lord of the Meeting Rivers as his supreme teacher, he is made to address Allama in the Śūnyasampādane version. And the compilers repeat in the prose narrative that the meaning of Basava's vacana is that he acknowledges Allama as his supreme guru. In this way, an attempt is made to depict Allama as the supreme guru of divine nature.

The theme of the divine guru is presented in several chapters of the Śūnyasampādane. The eleventh chapter describes 'the way the devotees sang praises of the great Prabhu, the supreme guru, when he came gladly to Basava's inner chamber', as the heading indicates. It is again Basava who adores Allama and bestows divine honours on him. It is told that Basava sang the guru's praise in Sanskrit when he worshipped Allama by waving the lamp in front of him. One verse of that song is:

Dīrghadaṇḍa namaskāraṃ nirlajjaṃ gurusannidhau
śarīramarthaṃ prāṇaṃ ca sadgurubhyō nivēdayēt endudāgi.[41]

It is said that one should present to the true guru body, wealth, and life,
with deep prostrations and without embarrassment in front of the guru.

It is doubtful whether these words do go back to Basava; but one thing is clear: the guru cult has become predominant here. Three more chapters of the Śūnyasampādane are interesting in this respect. The seventeenth chapter relates Allama's pilgrimage through the whole Indian subcontinent: including the Himalayas, where he visits the old Śaiva shrine at Kēdāra. When he returns to Kalyāṇa, he is received again with full honours. Basava erected a throne for him, the Śūnyasiṃhāsana or Throne of the Void.[42] Many vacanas are quoted which sing the praise of Allama, at least in the fashion in which the composers of the Śūnyasampādane present them. The eighteenth chapter is devoted to the ascending of

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41. *Śūnyasampādane* XI:6. Cf. Chidambar KULKARNI, 'Anubhāva Maṇṭapa', *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, Vol. XII, 1962, p. 16, who quotes this text in the course of an exposition in which he tries to demonstrate Basava's loyalty to Brāhmaṇa values.
42. The episode is also treated in detail by CĀMARASA, *Prabhuliṅgalīle* 21.

the throne by Allama; and the following chapter describes the enormous feast held on that occasion. The vacanas are characterized by allegorical language and profound mystical speculation. The climax is reached when Basava exclaims that Allama is none else than the divine principle of his own life (prāṇaliṅga). Obviously Allama has achieved the highest possible status: the jaṅgama has become the divine guru.

It is very interesting to note that this elevation of the guru involves a certain depreciation of the jaṅgama concept. Already in the fifteenth chapter of the Śūnyasampādane, we find a severe criticism of the host of 196,000 jaṅgamas who stayed at Kalyāṇa and were honoured and fed by Basava. It is the unconventional devotee Ghaṭṭivāḷayya, an actor, who makes fun of the jaṅgamas and mocks them because of their greed.

> Basava māḍihanendu bāyalli basiva lōḷeyanaṟiyade,
> esakadinda māḍuva husibhaktiyanaṟiyada
> ī kisivāyarigēke?
> Cikkayyapriyasiddhaliṅga illa illā ende.[43]

Unconscious that their mouth is watering
for what Basava might do for them!
Why [caring] for those grinning cheats,
who do not know that they are practising false devotion in such a style?
The Perfect Liṅga, dear to Cikkayya, I say, is not, is not.

Ghaṭṭivāḷayya makes perfectly clear that he refuses to be associated with that jaṅgama order (samaya) because it is full of hypocrisy and deceit.[44] His words still bear the stamp of his personal, unconventional attitude. However, the attack on the jaṅgamas becomes really fundamental in the chapter about Allama's ascending of the throne. In the fifteenth century prose text, it is told that the whole community of 196,000 jaṅgamas refused to recognize Allama in his exalted position, protested vehemently and left the place. An anonymous vacana expresses the anger of the jaṅgamas: Basava has been unfaithful by abandoning them and giving all his attention to a conjurer who pretends to be the Lord (Prabhu) himself.[45] Several vacanas are added which have all as subject the danger of hypocrisy and the importance of pure devotion. The texts give ample evidence of the shift in values compared with the initial period of the Vīraśaiva movement. The dynamic aspect of the new faith, embodied in the homeless jaṅgama, has faded into the background, whilst the static veneration of the guru on his throne has become predominant.

The Fifteenth Century - Siddhaliṅgēśvara

In the fifteenth century, we find two competing categories of monastics.

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[43] *Śūnyasampādane* XV:10 (GHAṬṬIVĀḶAYYA). His devotional signature is an expression of negative theology. It does not deny the existence of God, but it states that He is different from all human conceptions: God is not this and not that...

[44] See esp. *Śūnyasampādane* XV:25 (GHAṬṬIVĀḶAYYA).

[45] *Śūnyasampādane* XVIII:13. No author of the vacana is indicated by the compilers, which is very unusual. The text might be written by the washerman Mācayya since the name Kalidēva (Heroic God) is used, which is his devotional signature. It is, however, not unlikely that the vacana was written by the fifteenth century authors.

On the one hand, there are those who belong to monasteries that were originally non-Vīraśaiva. Many monastic institutions, mostly of the Kālāmukha school, were gradually taken over by the successful Vīraśaiva movement since the twelfth century. So the Vīraśaivas came to control the important Kālāmukha centres at Śriśaila, Kēdāra, Baḷḷigāve, Gadaga, and Hūli.[46] As a result, many temples connected with these centres also went over to Vīraśaivism: in spite of the fact that Basava had been strongly opposed to the static temple worship. These monastic centres, and all institutions founded later under their supervision, form the gurusthalada tradition. On the other hand, there is the virakta tradition, formed by those who trace their monastic lineage back to the original Vīraśaiva mendicants of the twelfth century. They are especially focused on the ideals of the twelfth century Vīraśaiva saints. During the first centuries, the viraktas were only loosely organized.[47] In the fifteenth century, however, a revival of the virakta movement took place in which the observance of the monastic rules was enforced and a stronger organization was established. Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara played a major role in this reorganization of the viraktas.

We might expect to find the new stress on the veneration of the guru particularly in the gurusthalada tradition; but the vacanas of Siddhaliṅgēśvara reveal that this new emphasis was also found in virakta circles. Many of his vacanas express great reverence for the religious teacher in a way that can hardly be imagined in the tradition of the dynamic jaṅgamas. A good example is the following text in which divine qualities are attributed to the guru.

Surataru vṛkṣadoḷagalla;
suradhēnu paśuvinoḷagalla;
paruṣa pāṣāṇadoḷagalla;
śiṣyana bhāvakke guru naranalla;
guruvē paramēśvaranendu bhāvisaballaḍe śiṣyanembenayyā,
Mahāliṅgaguru Śivasiddhēśvaraprabhuvē.[48]

The celestial tree does not belong to the trees;
the celestial cow does not belong to the cattle;
the philosopher's stone does not belong to the stones;
nor is the guru an ordinary man in the disciple's perception.
I call someone only a disciple
if he knows to imagine the guru as the highest Lord,
O Śiva, Great Teacher and Perfect Lord.

The meaning of the vacana is quite simple. The religious teacher is compared with the supernatural which cannot be classified in ordinary categories. The heavenly tree of plenty; the celestial cow who fulfils all wishes; and the philosopher's stone that turns everything into gold: all belong to the world of the gods. Similarly, the guru must be regarded by the disciples as belonging to the divine world. Obviously, Siddhaliṅgēśvara joins the guru cult which was so popular in his days. The twelfth century ideals, to which the viraktas said to be loyal, seem to be forgotten with regard to education. The democratic approach of early Vīraśaivism, with its stress on the role of the community as a teaching and controling body, no longer plays a role in the writings of Siddhaliṅgēśvara, in spite of his active role in the revival of the early Vīraśaiva monastic ideals. His vacanas are meant to instruct the young monks who will hold the high position as keepers of the religious lore. The preservation of that heritage is his aim: not its diffusion among the ordinary people.

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[46] David N. LORENZEN, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, Berkeley / Los Angeles, 1972, pp. 169–170; S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, p. 6; SADYOJATA Swamiji, *Śaiva and Vīraśaiva Maṭhas in Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1974, pp. 227–232.

[47] K. ISHWARAN states that the gurusthaladas and the viraktas formed originally one order; see his *Religion and Society among the Lingayats of South India*, Leiden, 1983, p. 82. This is very unlikely in view of the non-Vīraśaiva background of the gurusthalada tradition.

[48] SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 161 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, pp. 90–91). See also SIDDHALIṄGĒŚVARA, 157–160, 162–180, 193, 197, 270, 407, 408, 534, 535, 625.

The Fifteenth Century - Concluding Remarks

The ideals of popular awakening and mass education which were prevalent in the initial period of Vīraśaiva history, cannot be found in the authoritative scriptures of fifteenth century Vīraśaivism. The Śūnyasaṃpādane in its court milieu displays the spirit of consolidation and restoration of Brāhmaṇa values which is typical of the Vīraśaiva elite of that time. The democratic ideals of early Vīraśaivism have been largely abandoned and all emphasis is on the individual attainment of mystical success. Texts which were meant to educate the ordinary people are mostly not included in this compilation. And the most striking feature is the extremely exalted position of the religious teacher: the guru. This becomes particularly clear in the way in which Allama is portrayed as a living divinity who deserves all possible honour. The vacanas of Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara, although rooted in the virakta tradition, give the same picture. It seems that the influence of orthodox Śaiva orders, such as the Kālāmukhas, changed the Vīraśaiva community considerably. Taking over so many monasteries and even temples meant letting in the Trojan horse. The dynamic concept of the homeless jaṅgama as the representative of God was exchanged for the static image of the divine guru on his throne. Of course, no place is left in such a situation for the contribution of ordinary lay people to spiritual discussion. Thus, one of the vital aspects of the original Vīraśaiva movement was lost.

The Colonial Period - the Organization of a Community

Before we turn to our actual subject, education, it is useful to sketch the religious organization of the Liṅgāyatas in the colonial period. It appears that the originally dynamic movement was almost completely ossified at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The great monasteries had become powerful enterprises which controlled not only the religious and moral life of their subjects but a considerable part of agriculture and finance as well. The gurus displayed a craving for power and they were utterly conservative in social matters. There were still two categories of monasteries, those of the gurusthalada tradition and those of the virakta tradition. Both were very eager to retain their influence and they were mostly not on very friendly terms with each other.

The gurusthalada monasteries were hierarchically organized, at least in theory. The topposition was held by the pontiffs of five old monasteries: the pañcācārya maṭhas. The pañcācāryas are the five saints who are said to have founded these five head monasteries. The location of the five centres and the names of the alleged founders are:

Balehonnur	*Ujjaini*	*Kedar*	*Shrishaila*	*Benares*
(former Rambhāpurī)		(Kēdāra)	(Śrīśaila)	(Vārāṇasī) Jaṅgamavāḍi maṭha
Chikmagalur Dt.	Bellary Dt.	Himalayas	Kurnool Dt., A.P.	
Rēvaṇārādhya	*Maruḷārādhya*	*Paṇḍitārādhya*	*Ēkōrāmārādhya* .	*Viśvārādhya.*

Every local maṭha (monastery or vicary) was affiliated to one of the five head monasteries. There was officially an intermediate level of regional centres, called paṭṭada maṭhas; but this part of the power structure does not seem to have had much significance. All Liṅgāyata families were supposed to belong to one of the five pañcācārya maṭhas; although, in practice, this seems to have functioned mainly for members of the Jaṅgama caste. The pañcācārya maṭhas claimed to be of immemorial age and they traced the history of their founders back many thousands of years, sometimes to primordial times.[50] Actually, there is much evidence that at least two of the five founders, Rēvaṇārādhya and Maruḷārādhya, lived in the twelfth century.[51] On the other hand, the monasteries at Shrishaila, Ujjaini and Kedar are definitely much older than the time of Basava and the connection with temples attests their non-Vīraśaiva origin. Therefore, it is likely that the five saints were not the actual founders but the first Vīraśaiva gurus who occupied the pontifical thrones in these monasteries. At least, it appears that the legend of five founders is of rather recent date: for an authoritative book from the end of the sixteenth century mentions only four of them, omitting Viśvārādhya.[52] The latter's maṭha at Benares is probably later added because a respectable religious community was supposed to be based also in the holy town of Hinduism. The myth which relates the founding saints with the faces of Śiva, usually fivefold, may also have played a role.

The virakta monasteries had a looser organization, which is quite understandable in view of their character. The priests of the gurusthalada

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[49] R.C. ARTAL, 'A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith', *Journal of the Anthrop. Soc. Bombay*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1909, p. 209; M.R. SAKHARE, *History and Philosophy of Lingāyat Religion*, Dharwad, 1978, pp. 232-265; S.C. NANDIMATH, *A Handbook of Vīraśaivism*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 8-10; R. Blake MICHAEL, 'Foundation Myths of the Two Denominations of Vīraśaivism: *Viraktas* and *Gurusthalins*', *JAS*, Vol. XLII, 1983, pp. 309-322. The actual seat of the Shrishaila guru was shifted in the nineteenth century to Guntakal, Anantapur Dt., A.P.

[50] The traditional account is e.g. presented by Paṇḍita KĀŚINĀTHA ŚĀSTRI; see *Speeches by Pandit Sri Kashinatha Shastri on Veerashaiva Religion*, Mysore, 1931.

[51] See the elaborate treatment by SAKHARE, *History and Philosophy of the Lingāyat Religion*, pp. 232-265. He tries to prove that all five saints lived in the twelfth century or even later.

[52] VIRŪPĀKṢA PAṆḌITA, *Cannabasavapurāṇa* [1585] LIX (trl. pp. 210-211). An eighteenth century painting, kept at the Institute of Kannada Studies at Dharwar, likewise represents only four saints, leaving out Viśvārādhya.

maṭhas were involved in normal social life: they were usually married, except for those in the higher ranks, and they lived in the villages and towns where they performed the rituals for the community. The viraktas, on the contrary, were supposed to live outside the settlements, observing celibacy and leading a wandering life characterized by world renunciation and spiritual discipline. Actually, many viraktas also lived in monasteries, sometimes even in the neighbourhood of towns. They were divided into three orders (samaya) with the following headquarters:

Chitradurga	*Gadag and Dambal*	*Hubli*
Chitradurga Dt	Dharwar Dt.	Dharwar Dt.
Cinmūlādri Bṛhanmaṭha or Murugharājēndra maṭha	Tōṇṭadārya maṭha	Mūrusāvira maṭha
Murughi samaya	*Cīlāḷa samaya*	*Kumāra samaya.*

During the nineteenth century, a new classification into five samayas emerged: an obvious imitation of the fivefold gurusthalada structure.[53] However, in practice, only the threefold division was significant; and, even then, it should be noted that the virakta monasteries did not show very much commitment with their samaya. The viraktas did not claim such an unbelievable antiquity as the gurusthalada tradition, but they traced their history back to twelfth century Kalyāṇa. Particularly the monastery at Chitradurga claimed to be the direct continuation of the pontifical seat of Allama: the 'Throne of the Void' (Śūnyasiṃhāsana). However, the lineage of the gurus is counted from fifteenth century Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara and the oldest building of the monastery at Chitradurga dates from 1689.[54] Certainly, the ideas of the viraktas are rooted in the movement of Basava and his companions; but the line of the historical development as a monastic organization is not uninterrupted.

Both traditions of Vīraśaiva monasticism strove to make themselves acceptable to their orthodox Hindu neighbours. The heads of the bigger monasteries behaved just like other gurus, surrounding themselves with all the pomp and circumstance that was usual. However, their claims to such a high religious status were not always accepted by the outside world. When, in 1863, the pontiff of Balehonnur, the first in rank among the gurusthaladas, was carried in a procession on a certain palanquin with insignia as used by the guru of the neighbouring old Śaiva monastery of Sringeri (Śṛṅgēri), the reactions were furious. A riot broke out and the Mahārāja of Mysore stated in an official letter that such disrespect for the Sringeri guru was highly improper.[55] Sometimes the Vīraśaiva gurus, notably the viraktas, went even further with their claims than their colleagues of the orthodox schools. According to old Vīraśaiva belief, the guru was considered to be much holier than an image of a divinity. This gave rise to the custom that the guru placed his foot on the head of an idol, e.g. of Śiva's bull. The virakta guru of Chitradurga let himself every year be carried in procession in this posture, which gave great offence to the orthodox Hindus. The result was that the custom was banned by the government.[56]

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[53] As fourth order is mentioned the Kempina samaya, based at Hulikunte or Kalyana. The fifth one would be the Sampādane samaya at Ontumuri or Hagalavadi, which is, however, sometimes regarded as identical with the fourth order. It is apparently a theoretical construction and so it is not surprising that the names of the orders and its headquarters differ in almost all descriptions. See the dissimilar information presented by ARTAL, 'A Short Account of the Reformed Shaiva or Veerashaiva Faith', p. 250; H.M. SADASIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study of Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, Mysore, 1967, p. 93; SADYOJATA Swamiji, *Śaiva and Vīraśaiva Maṭhas in Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1974, pp. 266–274; Lise F. VAIL, *Renunciation, Love, and Power in Hindu Monastic Life*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1987, p. 27.

[54] SADASIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study of Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, pp. 127–128.

However, conflicts did not only arise with outsiders. Within the Liṅgāyata community too, claims to a high religious status could give rise to upheaval and struggle. A striking illustration is found in the continuous opposition during the nineteenth century against the abbots of the maṭha at Sirigere. This monastery was founded in the first years of that century after a conflict about succession in the pañcācārya maṭha at Ujjaini. According to the seceders, the last pontiff of Ujjaini had appointed a man from the Sādaru caste as his successor. This was very unusual; because such high dignitaries were invariably recruited from the Jaṅgama caste. When the pontiff died, an influential part of the adherents of the maṭha refused to acknowledge the successor. Then the whole Sādaru community seceded from Ujjaini. Their guru tried to set up a new maṭha in the village of Sirigere. The first attempts failed; because the Mahārāja of Mysore ordered the Sādarus in 1812 to conform to the authority of the old monastery. But the Sādarus persevered and in 1825 they got permission from the Mahārāja to appoint their own guru in Sirigere.[57] Their main adversaries were not the gurus of Ujjaini but the virakta monastery at nearby Chitradurga. Many conflicts broke out. A typical example was the riot in 1872 in which lay adherents of that maṭha interfered when the Sirigere guru let himself be carried in procession with the insignia of the highest ranks, such as the usual palanquin and red umbrellas. The matter was taken to court four times and, every time, the Sirigere party won the case.[58] The situation did not become easier when, in about 1885, some disciples from the Sirigere monastery seceded and thus the village had two maṭhas for some time. The guru of the new maṭha tried to obtain permission to use the same insignia as the guru of the old maṭha in his processions. Immediately the old maṭha protested and several court cases and appeals to the government were the result. The gurus of Balehonnur, Ujjaini and Chitradurga took the opportunity to question the rights of both maṭhas.

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55. Information found in Suit No. 80 of 1873, Court of the Judicial Assistant Commissioner, Chitaldroog District, in the Archives of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha, Sirigere.
56. H.V. NANJUNDAYYA, L.K. ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, Mysore, 1931, p. 115; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XV, Part I: *Kánara*, Bombay, 1883, p. 177.
57. Data from the Archives of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha, Sirigere.
58. Court of the Judicial Assistant Commissioner, Chitaldroog District, 9th June 1873; id. (appeal) 13th October 1873; Court of the Commissioner of Nagar Division, Shimoga, 31st December 1873; Court of the Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, Bangalore, 26th May 1874. Suits in the Archives of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha, Sirigere.

Finally, the government confirmed the customary rights of the guru of the old maṭha and allowed some of the insignia to the guru of the new maṭha as well.[59] These confusing events illustrate the attempts of the Liṅgāyata religious leaders to imitate orthodox Hindu culture and to find recognition as real gurus with all corresponding authority, in spite of the ideals of the founding period of Vīraśaivism.

The Colonial Period - an Educational Revival

It could hardly be expected that the conservative monastic institutions would play a role in the process of development and modernization in the Liṅgāyata community. Nevertheless, the end of the nineteenth century shows an educational revival among the Liṅgāyatas in which several monasteries played a major role. The revival originated among lay people in that area which had been the stronghold of the Liṅgāyata community since long time: the regions of Dharwar and Belgaum. Rich members of the community started to raise funds in order to provide for the education of Liṅgāyata boys. One of the first of these initiatives was the founding of the Lingayat Education Association at Dharwar in 1883. The activities of the association consisted of awarding scholarships to Liṅgāyata boys to enable them to study at the colleges at Poona or Bombay; and even to send a Liṅgāyata student to England in order to complete his academic education. In 1887, a committee of wealthy Liṅgāyatas in Belgaum put up prizes for the first boys of the community who would obtain the degrees of M.A. or LL.B. from the University of Bombay. The most famous organization became the Karnataka Lingayat Education Society of Belgaum (K.L.E.S.), established in 1916. Already in the same year, it opened its own high school; and many schools and colleges were founded by the K.L.E.S. in subsequent years. Other initiatives included establishing libraries and hostels.[60] Obviously, a new caste awareness stimulated all educational efforts which could strengthen the position of the community. It was the time of the non-Brāhmaṇa movement, in which several castes tried to break the Brāhmaṇa monopoly of higher education and government jobs. The Liṅgāyatas were, especially in the Princely State of Mysore, the major party in this movement.[61] A similar educational society as in the northern area was founded in Mysore in 1905, the Mysore Lingayat Education Fund Association (M.L.E.F.A.). The methods of these societies were not quite the same. In the Princely State of Mysore, the government was active in founding educational institutes. As a result, for the M.L.E.F.A., the emphasis lay on providing scholarships and hostel facilities in order to enable the Liṅgāyata boys to study at already-existing institutes. The areas round Dharwar and Belgaum, belonging to the Bombay Presidency, were less favoured with educational institutes and the government tended to leave this task to private initiative. Thus the K.L.E.S. and similar organizations developed great activities to establish schools and colleges.

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[59] Proceedings of the Government of H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore, Muzrai 68-08-2, Bangalore 29th October 1908, in the Archives of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha, Sirigere.

[60] Arun P. BALI, 'The Virasaiva Movements', in: S.C. MALIK [ed], *Indian Movements*, Simla, 1978, pp. 80-81; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIII: *Bijápur*, Bombay, 1884, p. 238; N.J. BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, pp. 298-299.

[61] See pages 76-77.

The Liṅgāyata propagandists of education realized that they needed for their various activities broad popular support as well as massive investments. So they turned to the big monasteries for help. Several gurus recognized the importance of educational initiatives and were willing to make a contribution. One task especially was regarded as congruent with the goals of the maṭhas: promoting classical Sanskrit learning. The monasteries founded thus a number of schools for Sanskrit education, called saṃskṛta pāṭhaśāle. One of the first was the Śrī Jagadguru Gaṅgādhara Saṃskṛta Pāṭhaśāle, attached to the Mūrusāvira maṭha at Hubli. The school was founded in 1901 by the new abbot of the monastery: Śrī Gaṅgādhara, who was himself a renowned Sanskrit scholar, educated at Benares. The school gave him a name as a propagator of education, especially because he took this initiative already in the first year of his office. In the beginning, the lessons were given by the guru himself. In 1925, the status of the school was raised to mahāvidyālaya or college. The monastery also provided boarding and lodging for Liṅgāyata students of the Sanskrit school in the Śrī Jagadguru Gurusiddhēśvara Dāsōha Mandira. Students from other castes could only take advantage of the lodging facilities.[62] A similar Sanskrit college, which would play an important role in the educational history of the Liṅgāyata community, was the Vēda Pāṭhaśāle of Siddhagaṅga maṭha, near Tumkur, established in 1917. The institute only grew slowly in the first period of its existence; but in 1938, it was recognized as a college, called Śrī Siddhaliṅgēśvara Sanskrit College, and since then its significance has increased. The need for a hostel was also felt in this maṭha, particularly because it is situated some kilometers outside the town of Tumkur. Such a hostel had already been founded in 1918. The set-up was rather modern: pupils from all castes were welcome in the hostel. Previously, the non-Liṅgāyata students were not allowed to reside in the maṭha, although food was served to them.[63]

It is an irony of history that Vīraśaiva monasteries, and notably virakta maṭhas, developed such activities for the promotion of Sanskrit learning, which seems to be completely in contradiction with the ideals of the founders of the movement. However, there was an important reason for the Liṅgāyatas to engage themselves in Sanskrit education: for precisely that was the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇa community. By starting their own Sanskrit colleges, the Liṅgāyatas launched a frontal attack on the cultural and intellectual dominance of the Brāhmaṇas. Other initiatives for the promotion of education by the Vīraśaiva monasteries included the establishment of the Vīraśaiva Vidyāvardhaka Fund Saṅgha at Davangere in 1907, under the patronage of the guru of the principal virakta monastery at Chitradurga. The Saṅgha was supported by the Liṅgāyata merchants at Davangere, who raised part of the opening capital and consequently maintained the inflow of money by reserving a handful of corn from every bag that came in their shops. The funds were used to provide boarding and lodging to students.[64] Not only the virakta monasteries were active in this field; some of the gurusthalada tradition also followed their example. Thus, the Taraḷabāḷu maṭha at Sirigere founded student hostels in Chickmagalur (1913) and Davangere (1923). The financing of these schools and hostels lay with the monasteries and their circles of devotees. The government, both of the Princely State of Mysore and of the Bombay Presidency, maintained a system of grants-in-aid. Usually, the institutes had to prove for some time that they could run by their own resources, before they were entitled to receive government aid. And even then, the grants were seldom to cover more than half of the expenses. The students often came from poor families which were hardly able to pay even the lowest fees. As a result, the private educational societies and monasteries had to provide large sums of money every year. The bigger monasteries had disposal of rather large incomes from their extended landed properties and sometimes considerable capital. Nevetheless, it is remarkable that the gurus of these monasteries were willing to make such a great contribution to an aim which had never played an important role in their monastic culture. The impact of the various initiatives on the Vīraśaiva community was great. Whereas the community was known in the nineteenth century for its backwardness regarding education,[65] since the nineteen-twenties they were superior to other non-Brāhmaṇa Hindu castes with respect to literacy.[66]

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[62] G.S. BIDARAKOPPA, *Role of Religious Institutions in The Promotion of Social Welfare in Dharwar District, Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1978, pp. 143-148.

[63] H.M. SADAŚIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study of Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, Mysore, 1967, pp. 224-243.

The Colonial Period - Concluding Remarks

The most striking feature of Vīraśaivism in the colonial period is the emancipatory drive which worked out especially in the field of education. The Liṅgāyata community was stimulated by an increasing self-awareness; and, consequently, the Liṅgāyatas played an active part in the non-Brāhmaṇa movement. Together with other castes, they attempted to undermine the monopoly position of the Brāhmaṇa caste and to secure their own share in government employment. A sound education was the first condition for success in this struggle. Hence, many initiatives were taken to improve education among the Liṅgāyatas. The community had the advantage of strong monastic organizations, which had acquired not only a considerable status but also impressive properties. Especially the virakta maṭhas made a major contribution to the spread of education in the Liṅgāyata community by founding schools and colleges and providing boarding and lodging facilities to students. The viraktas were more oriented towards the ideals of Basava and the other vacanakāras of the twelfth century than the monasteries of the gurusthalada tradition. So they were sooner inclined to recognize the importance of the new educational pursuits. These monasteries as well as some powerful lay associations proved to be able to bring about a drastic change in the educational level of the Liṅgāyatas. The revival, started at the end of the nineteenth century, gave the Liṅgāyata community a new look within three or four decades.

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[64] SADASIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study of Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, pp. 155-156.

[65] C.P. BROWN, 'Essay on the Creed, Customs and Literature of the Jangams', *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XI, 1840, p. 175; *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. XXIV: *Kolhápur*, Bombay, 1886, p. 133; Edgar THURSTON, K. RANGACHARI, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, Delhi, 1975 [first ed. 1909], Vol. IV, p. 237.

[66] H.V. NANJUNDAYYA, L.K. ANANTHAKRISHNA IYER, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes*, Vol. IV, Mysore, 1931, p. 87.

Post-Independence India - Monastic Diversity

The period after India's Independence shows a furthergoing diversity in monastic life. The small maṭhas of the gurusthalada tradition, more vicaries than monasteries, can still be found in almost all places where Liṅgāyatas live. The priests, invariably from the Jaṅgama caste, are engaged in the performance of rituals for the members of the community, especially the rites of passage. Most of them derive their main income not from the priestly duties but from other occupations, such as agriculture. Generally, they are not very learned and their influence is limited to their own village or town. All maṭhas of this tradition are still formally subordinated to one of the five pañcācārya monasteries; but the actual supervision of these pontifical seats is rather shallow. Since the twenties, a cold war is going on between the gurusthalada monasteries and those of the virakta tradition. The latter played an active role in the revival of the Basava heritage, which was conspicuously in keeping with the new ideals of equality and democracy fostered by the Indian intelligentsia. The gurusthalada monasteries, however, reacted strongly to this new trend.[67] In confrontation with the viraktas, they stressed their own, primordial tradition and attacked strongly the egalitarian values of the Basava movement, which they regarded as heretical modernisms. This conservative standpoint resulted in an enormous loss of respect among the more enlightened sections of the population. Furthermore, the traditionalism of these monasteries, notably the five pañcācārya maṭhas, made it almost impossible for them to contribute to the Indian independence movement and the corresponding reawakening of the Liṅgāyata community. The result was their disappearance from the public forum. This went so far that some authors even question the existence of the Liṅgāyata thrones at Kedar and Benares![68] However, the five pañcācārya maṭhas certainly exist and they exert their spiritual authority over large sections of the Liṅgāyata people; but their influence is limited to the countryside and they get scarcely any attention from the press or the political and cultural elite. Thus, the guru of Balehonnur has his main following amongst Liṅgāyata villagers in Southern Maharashtra, where he travels about for many months every year. The five pontiffs have good contact with each other; and on special occasions, they are carried together in huge processions. This happened, for example, in February 1989 on the occasion of the golden monastic jubilee of the senior guru of Ujjaini: Śrī 1008 Jagadguru Sthira Paṭṭādhyakṣa Śrī

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67. See also pages 77-78.
68. Stephen OREN, 'Killing a Myth: A Note on the Lingayat Mutts of Mysore State and Their Political Influence', *JIH*, Golden Jub. Vol., 1973, p. 778; C. PARVATHAMMA, *Politics and Religion*, New Delhi, 1971, p. 10.

15.*Śrī Siddhēśvaraliṅga, the pontiff of Kedar, carried in procession*

16.*Śrī Siddhēśvara, the senior guru of Ujjaini*

17.*Śrī Umāpati, the pontiff of Shrishaila, carried in procession*

18.*Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Dr. Śivamūrti, Sirigere*

19.*Gurusthalada and virakta: Śrī Dēśikēndra, Suttur, and Śivabasava Svāmi, Kundur maṭha*

20.*Entrance of the Mūrusāviramaṭha, Hubli*

21.*Svāmi Siddhaliṅga, Tōṇṭadārya maṭha, Dambal-Gadag*

22.*Śrī Śivabasava of Naganur maṭha, Belgaum, (born 1891)*

23.*Śrī Kumārasvāmiji as he is worshipped in his Tapōvana, Dharwar*

Siddhēśvara Rājadēśikēndra Mahāsvāmigaḷu.[69] The conservatism of the pañcācāryas is proverbial. Particularly the former pontiff of the Balehonnur maṭha, Śrī Vīra Gaṅgādhara who occupied the throne till 1972, was noted for his resistance to the egalitarian ideals of Basava. He is said to have refused on a festive occasion to pass under a portrait of Basava, whereas, shortly before, he had gone without objections under a portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru (who was even pictured with leather shoes).[70] Personally, I was confronted with this conservatism, when the senior guru of Ujjaini flatly refused to speak one word about Basava in reply to my questions.[71] However, not all monasteries of the gurusthalada tradition represent this traditionalistic form of Vīraśaivism. The Taraḷabāḷu monastery at Sirigere, originally seceded from Ujjaini, has developed after Independence into a Basava-oriented institution with a strong social concern. Likewise, the big monastery of Suttur, belonging to the Balehonnur tradition but very independent, is engaged in an impressive number of social and educational activities.

The virakta monasteries play a leading role in the preservation of Basava's heritage. They had an active part in the Liṅgāyata revival of the second quarter of the twentieth century and they are still the propagators of the ideals of the Kalyāṇa community of śaraṇas. There is, however, much variety among the virakta monasteries. Some have remained loyal to the classical ideals of ascetic renouncement, whilst others have become active organizations of social work and education. A typical feature of the modern virakta monasteries is that many of them shift their headquarters to the towns. Originally, virakta maṭhas were as a rule in remote places where the influence of secular life was minimal. The head monasteries of the three virakta orders (samaya) were, nevertheless, in the neighbourhood of towns: near Chitradurga, Gadag, and Hubli respectively. After Independence, several smaller monasteries also opened offices in the towns, which soon surpassed the original seats in importance. Thus, we find in the big town of Bangalore the headquarters of the Beli maṭha and the Uruvakonda maṭha, in Mysore town that of Kundur maṭha, and in the town of Belgaum the main institutions of Naganur maṭha. The location in an urban setting fits in better with the modern understanding of the task of a virakta monk. The ideal of world renunciation is still recognized; but social and even political engagement is regarded as important too. One of the virakta gurus stated: 'I am a religious leader who has abandoned all personal attachments and bonds. That is why I am called a virakta. Whatever that may be I confess my inability to sever at least one fundamental attachment - my attachment to my land, my people and our literature.'[72] This guru was very active in the movement for a unified Karnataka, comprising all Kannaḍa-speaking territories, and hence, he was popularly known as the Ēkīkaraṇa Svāmīji - the unification priest. There are more virakta gurus - and some of the gurusthalada tradition too - who are known for their political influence. Especially in the fifties and sixties, it was not unusual that the results of elections were determined by the propaganda of some mighty gurus among their followers. The virakta monastery of Chitradurga and the gurusthalada maṭha at Sirigere had an age-old conflict and their competition played a major role in regional political elections.[73] The present abbots of these monasteries, however, are on friendly terms with each other and they are rather detached with regard to political action.

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[69] I attended the six hours' procession and the following functions on February 11th and 12th, 1989, in the town of Bellary. Six gurus were to be carried in the procession: the senior and the junior guru of Ujjaini, the guru of Balehonnur, the guru of Kedar, the guru of Shrishaila, and the guru of the Jaṅgamavāḍi maṭha at Benares. The latter was unable to reach the town in time, but he was at least there 'in effigie': for the portraits of all six gurus were printed on invitations and programmes. See fig. 15 and 17.

[70] Related to me by several informants.

[71] Interview with Śrī Siddhēśvara at his residence in the village of Gadimakunte (Chitradurga Dt) on February 8th, 1989.

Gurusthalada maṭhas always have abbots from the Jaṅgama caste, with the exception of the Sirigere maṭha and its branch maṭhas which are governed by the Sādaru caste. Virakta monks are also recruited from the Jaṅgama caste, although there are a few exceptions (Ilkal, Siddhagaṅgā). In the post-Independence period we find, however, a third category of Vīraśaiva monasteries, which are dominated by non-Jaṅgama castes. These monasteries could be called svatantra or independent maṭhas.[74] They were founded with the express purpose of creating a new and more liberal tradition of monasticism. This includes that also people from non-Jaṅgama castes can undergo monastic initiation, but likewise are these maṭhas characterized by their openness to other philosophical traditions than only the Vīraśaiva interpretation. Some of the maṭhas were founded by monks from one of the traditional Vīraśaiva lineages. Thus, Svāmi Liṅgānanda, initiated at Suttur maṭha, founded the Viśva Kalyāṇa Mission of which Māte Mahādēvi became the foremost leader.[75] One of the older monasteries of this category, which has played an important role in the Liṅgāyata revival, is the Navakalyāṇa maṭha at Dharwar. The centre was founded in 1935 by a Vīraśaiva school teacher, V.R. Koppal. It was meant to bring about a revival of the Vīraśaiva ideals of the initial period, hence the name 'New Kalyāṇa Monastery'.

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[72] The abbot of the Uruvakonda maṭha, quoted from a Kannaḍa newspaper of 1949 by K. ISHWARAN, *Religion and Society among the Lingayats of South India*, Leiden, 1983, p. 125.

[73] Elaborately described by GURUMURTHY K. Gowdra, *The Role of Factions in the Community Development Projects in a Mysore Village*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1972, pp. 322-408, 505-510.

[74] N.J. BRADFORD introduced the confusing term 'bhakta-gurus', indicating that these monastics are of non-Jaṅgama birth; see his *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, p. 340. Lise F. VAIL calls them 'independent svāmis': *Renunciation, Love, and Power in Hindu Monastic Life*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1987, p. 30. The distinguishing feature of these maṭhas is, however, not that their gurus are from non-Jaṅgama castes but that their organizations neither claim nor actually have any links with the traditional gurusthalada or virakta structures. The Sirigere gurus are also non-Jaṅgama by birth, but they claim to represent the legitimate continuation of the Ujjaini seat, and hence, they are generally considered to belong to the gurusthalada tradition and not to the third category.

[75] See pages 229-230.

The first guru became a young graduate who was called Kumārasvāmīji. He was well acquainted with Western philosophy and in a number of books and articles he connected the Vīraśaiva philosophical concepts with the works of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Bergson. This attracted the attention of several Western scholars and spiritual seekers. Certainly, it is to a large extent to his credit that Vīraśaivism became known as a living tradition in the academic circles of both India and the West. He was an honorary professor in philosophy at the Karnatak University in Dharwar for some time; and he was considered to be the main spokesman of the Liṅgāyata community. However, during the sixties, Śrī Kumārasvāmīji gradually dissociated himself from the Vīraśaiva tradition and turned his mind to the general Hindu ascetic practice of yoga. He broke with the Navakalyāṇa maṭha and founded his own āśrama, called Tapōvana, in Dharwar in 1965. Since then both the Navakalyāṇa maṭha and Śrī Kumārasvāmīji have lost much of their influence and prestige in the Liṅgāyata community.[76]

Post-Independence India - the Education Boom

It was necessary to give an account of the monastic organization of present-day Vīraśaivism before turning to our actual subject: education. The main stimulators of education in the post-Independence period are namely the monasteries. That does not mean that the societies of lay people have lost their importance, but they are in many cases also dependent on the wealthy monasteries. The Mūrusāvira maṭha at Hubli, one of the chief virakta monasteries, supported, for instance, with substantial gifts of land and money, six colleges run by the K.L.E.S. The latter changed in 1949 the word 'Lingayat' in its name into 'Liberal' in order to conform to modern standards and thus not to lose the governmental grants-in-aid. But the society is still completely governed by the Liṅgāyatas, and it serves with its institutions in the first place the needs of their own community; although, of course, students from other castes are also admitted. The society runs more than 30 educational institutions, half of which are at college level.[77] The Mūrusāvira maṭha not only supports schools and colleges run by other organizations, but also has its own educational institutions. These include: a nursery school; a primary school; a high school for boys and one for girls; a Hindi school; a Sanskrit school; a Sanskrit college; a school for nurses; a women's industrial training institution; a women's arts and commerce college; a fine arts college; and a kīrtane college (for the training of religious singers). In addition, the monastery has established some hostels and boarding homes.[78] Other virakta monasteries with a similar range of educational activities are the Murughā maṭha at Dharwar and the Naganur maṭha at Belgaum.[79] However, although these monasteries display great educational activities, they do not hold the leading position among the viraktas with regard to the propagation of education. That position is certainly for the monastery of Siddhagaṅgā near the town of Tumkur. This monastery, which was founded only a hundred years ago, has become a large educational organization. Many schools, colleges, and hostels are run under the auspices of this maṭha. At Siddhagaṅgā itself is the centre of the educational work: the Sanskrit college that was founded as early as 1917. Today it has 2.500 students on its books. Together with the students of the other schools and colleges on the maṭha premises, more than 4.000 boys and girls have to be fed every day. Also in other places, the maṭha runs schools and colleges at various levels. There are more than sixty institutions established by the Siddhagaṅgā maṭha in total, among which: more than thirty high schools; a junior college; a college for sciences, arts, and commerce; an engineering college; a college of education; and a school for the blind. The budget for education proper is mostly paid by the government; but the monastery has invested large sums in the establishing of the various institutions and it bears largely the costs of boarding and lodging. The great expansion of educational work is chiefly the merit of the present abbot of the monastery: Śrī Śivakumāra, who has held this post since 1941. He embodies the typical virakta stress on 'work as worship' and education as the main purpose of monasteries. He is generally recognized as one of the greatest propagators of education and he even received a honorary doctorate from Karnatak University for his social accomplishments. Unfortunately, the prestige of the maṭha is affected during the last years by serious conflicts in connection with the succession of the guru.[80]

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[76] For the publications of Śrī Kumārasvāmīji see pages 291-292. About the guru and his maṭha: J.M. HONDIUS, *Pelgrimstocht door India*, Den Haag / Parijs, 1962, pp. 131-201, 228-254 (in Dutch); BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, pp. 345-349; *Profiles of Tapasviji Maharaj Sri Kumaraswamiji*, Dharwar, 1967; *Amrut Kumbha*, Dharwar, 1984. The appreciation of foreigners appears from the latter publication as well as from the prefaces in the svāmi's own books which include recommendations by Paul Brunton, J.M. Holmes, F.O. Schrader, and Peter Rendel.

[77] T.N. MADAN, B.G. HALBAR, 'Caste and Community in the Private and Public Education of Mysore State', in: Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, Lloyd I. Rudolph [eds], *Education and Politics in India*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 121-147; N.J. BRADFORD, *Affine and Devotee*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Sussex, 1976, pp. 298-299.

The viraktas were the first to undertake the task of education among the Liṅgāyata community; but their example was followed by a number of gurusthalada monasteries. Even very conservative maṭhas have nowadays some educational activities. There is also a big junior college connected with the maṭha of Balehonnur, the most traditional of the pañcācārya maṭhas! However, there are in particular two big monasteries in the gurusthalada tradition which have an outstanding position as patrons of education. These are the Taraḷabāḷu maṭha at Sirigere and the Suttur maṭha. The monastery at Sirigere has joined the Basava revival from the beginning, unlike the pañcācārya maṭhas to whose tradition it belongs. The social ideals of Basava and the early vacanakāras are often quoted in publications of the maṭha. The complete English translation of Basava's vacanas was edited by a society connected with this monastery. Not only the present abbot, Dr. Śivamūrti, but already his predecessor displayed an intense admiration for Basava and his revolutionary movement.[81] The oldest educational institutions of the Taraḷabāḷu monastery were some hostels and the almost obligatory Sanskrit school. In 1946, a high school was established at Sirigere, followed by a large number of schools and colleges, especially in the sixties and seventies. Nowadays, the monastery runs 157 educational institutions, including an engineering college; a college of education; 5 degree colleges; a polytechnic; 10 junior colleges; 70 high schools; and not less than 48 student hostels. The institutions, particularly the high schools, are mostly located in rural areas where no other educational facilities are available. The total number of students of all the schools is said to exceed 25.000.[82] An educational enterprise of similar proportions was established by the ancient monastery of Suttur, which has its headquarters nowadays in the town of Mysore. It claims to give education to 20.000 boys and girls in its 136 institutions, including 14 Sanskrit and Hindi schools; 30 high schools; 5 junior colleges; 9 training institutes; 3 polytechnics; and 14 colleges, including a college of engineering and a prestigious medical college. This great educational activity is the more remarkable, since the Suttur maṭha was originally not very much in favour of the ideals of Basava and his fellow vacanakāras. The gurus were strongly oriented towards the philosophical Sanskrit tradition of Vīraśaivism. However, Śrī Śivarātrirājēndra who was the Suttur abbot from 1934 till his death in 1986, was very socially concerned and displayed a keen interest in the development of the country. He imitated the virakta educational projects by founding in 1954 the Jagadguru Śrī Śivarātrīśvara Mahāvidyāpīṭha, an educational society which opened its first high school already in the same year. The very wealthy maṭha has since then invested large sums through this society in various educational establishments.[83]

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[78] G.S. BIDARAKOPPA, *Role of Religious Institutions in The Promotion of Social Welfare in Dharwar District, Karnataka*, Ph.D. thesis, Karnatak Univ., Dharwar, 1978, pp. 142-174; information also derived from a leaflet of the maṭha: *Shree Jagadguru Moorusaviramath: A Glance*, Hubli, 1985, p. 4.

[79] About the former: R.C. HIREMATH, *The Modern Nalanda*, Dharwad, n.y.

[80] H.M. SADASIVAIAH, *A Comparative Study of Two Vīraśaiva Monasteries*, Mysore, 1967, pp. 219-243 (information up to 1959). Besides my own observations, information derived from leaflets of the monastery: *Sree Siddaganga Mutt*, Tumkur, 1982; *Dr Sivakumara Medical Foundation*, Tumkur, n.y.

The third category of Liṅgāyata monasteries, those in the svatantra line, are usually not engaged in educational institutions. These monastic organizations are mostly rather small and they do not have at their disposal capital and land as is the case with the bigger monasteries in the other categories. Sometimes, they defend themselves by critical remarks about the educational activities of the other maṭhas. Thus, Māte Mahādēvi states that providing secular education and running institutions is not an essential task of maṭhas, but belongs to the duties of the government.[84] On the other hand, several gurus of this category made a valuable contribution by reflecting upon the principles of education and learning. And their books are not only read by the adherents of their own organizations, but also by the Indian intelligentsia outside the traditional circles connected with monasteries.[85]

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[81] Śri Śivakumāra Śivācārya (not to be confused with the Siddhagaṅgā guru) wrote a long introduction extolling Basava in: L.M.A. MENEZES, S.M. ANGADI [trls], *Vacanas of Basavaṇṇa*, Sirigere, 1967, pp. 15-71.

[82] Data from my own visits to the maṭha and from various leaflets published by the maṭha: *Sri Taralabalu Jagadguru Brihanmath*, Sirigere, n.y.; *Religious, Social and Educational Institutions*, Sirigere, n.y.

[83] Data from various publications of the maṭha: CHANDRASEKHARAIAH *The Heritage of Suttur Mutt*, Mysore, 1985; H.P. MALLĒDĒVARU [ed], *Arcana*, Mysore, 1984; *List of Institutions*, Mysore, 1988; *Jagadguru Sri Shivarathreeshwara Mahavidyapeetha, Mysore:* A Bird's Eyeview, Mysore, n.y.; *Sree Shivarathreeshwara Maha Samsthana Suttur*, Mysore, n.y.; *Jagadguru Sri Shivarahtreeswara Medical College & Hospital*, Mysore, n.y. I interviewed the present abbot, Śri Dēśikēndra, on January 10th, 1987.

The effect of the educational endeavours in the Liṅgāyata community is impressive. The establishment of schools by their own monasteries made many people aware of the usefulness of school education. Some of the bigger monasteries exert a powerful influence on people in rural areas where education was not valued very much so far. Their high schools are visited by students who would never get the opportunity to go to the towns for education. The numerous hostels make education possible for boys and girls from remote villages too. It is generally acknowledged that the Liṅgāyata community made an enormous progress in education. Data from various studies confirm this remarkable development.[86]

Post-Independence India - Concluding Remarks

During the last decades, the Liṅgāyata community stands out with regard to education. The educational activities, which already started in the first half of the century, have been expanded tremendously. The result is that the community has nowadays the highest level of education after the Brāhmaṇas, who traditionally held the monopoly position in this domain. The main stimulus for the numerous educational establishments came from the Liṅgāyata monasteries which launched into this undertaking with great zeal. In the first place, the virakta maṭhas set up large numbers of institutions, particularly high schools and colleges and the accompanying hostels. The background of the new orientation towards social engagement can be found in the revival of the ideas of the early vacanakāras, which started in the nineteen-twenties in virakta circles. This revival fitted in with the new Indian self-awareness created by the independence movement. Some of the bigger virakta monasteries rendered great services to the Liṅgāyata community and society at large by applying the old Vīraśaiva ideals in practice by their educational projects. Together with some organizations of lay people, they made it possible for a substantial part of the community to be educated at the level of high school or even college. The viraktas were followed in their educational efforts by a number of the bigger gurusthalada monasteries. Some of them were already involved in the Basava revival, others joined the education movement from another background. Not all the revolutionary ideals of the mystics of the twelfth century were taken over by their modern successors, but at least the endeavours to uplift the masses were taken up in a new way by the initiatives which led to the education boom of the last decades.

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[84] Māte MAHĀDĒVI, *A Guide to Lingayatism*, Dharwar, 1973, p. IX.

[85] A good example of creative reflection about education is Shri KUMARASWAMIJI's little book *Education and Socialism*, Dharwar, 1955, especiallly the first article: on *Organic Education*, written on request of the UNESCO.

[86] See e.g. G. SHIVARUDRAPPA, *Contributions of Veerashaiva Mathas to the Development of Education in Karnatak*, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Mysore, 1974; Chitra SIVAKUMAR, 'Higher Education, Social Stratification and Social Change in Mysore in the 1960s', in: M.N. Srinivas, S. Seshaiah, V.S. Parthasarathy [eds], *Dimensions of Social Change in India*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 189-213; C. PARVATHAMMA, *Sociological Essays on Veerasaivism*, Bombay, 1972, p. 69; Danesh A. CHEKKI, *Modernization and Kin Network*, Leiden, 1974, p. 105; N.K. KADETOTAD, *Family & Marriage*, Delhi, 1979, p. 78.

EVALUATION

'So far as I can see, the sect is one of the most interesting in all India'. This was the verdict of the famous Indologist J.N. Farquhar in 1914 on the subject of the Vīraśaiva movement.[1] But he also complained that only scanty descriptions in English were available. And he even went so far as to judge that none of the authors had understood Vīraśaivism. Three-quarters of a century later, the Vīraśaiva movement has become more accessible: many text editions and translations unlocked the vast literature of the movement; and a number of historical and anthropological studies provided a certain insight into the development and the present situation of the Vīraśaiva community. Nevertheless, it is still difficult to present an accurate description of this multifacetted socio-religious movement. Its history shows many blank spaces; the meaning and impact of its literature is sometimes hard to grasp; and the difference between idealistic enthusiasm and actual changes in belief and behaviour is not always to determine. But, at least, our greater knowledge of Vīraśaivism results in agreeing with Farquhar: it is a highly interesting phenomenon in the religious history of India.

The most fascinating period of Vīraśaivism is, without any doubt, the initial phase. Then, in the second half of the twelfth century, the movement displayed a very impressive spiritual and social activity. It was especially the inspiring charisma of Basava which brought about a religious uplift among a large host of followers from various backgrounds. Basava preached a practical form of spirituality which was characterized by personal devotion (bhakti). The importance of traditional religious institutions such as the temple cult was strongly relativized. Instead of static religious patterns, a new dynamic way of worship and mysticism was introduced. This appealed in particular to people from the lower strata of Hindu society who had generally been barred from participation in the dominant religious culture.

As a result, the foremost feature of early Vīraśaivism was the heterogeneous community which came into being around Basava in the town of Kalyāṇa. Devotees of every background, from high-caste priests to very low-caste washermen and tanners, joined the new community. Caste barriers were regarded as non-existent for all those who honoured Śiva as the only god and wore his holy symbol, the liṅga, on their body. The personal liṅga was believed to remove automatically all kinds of pollution and thus to upgrade low-born people. Similarly, women became equal to men in the eyes of the Vīraśaivas if they wore the sacred liṅga. This levelling function of the liṅga brought about a remarkable change in interpersonal relationships. Age-old social barriers were removed and a feeling of equality dominated life in the spiritual community.

New types of religious authority and sacred literature reflected the new experience of fundamental equality of all devotees. Although the traditional religious preceptors were still held in esteem (and Basava and other leaders were likewise honoured as gurus), a shared authority of all devotees crystallized in the discussions in the 'Hall of Spiritual Experience'. And the small poetic texts in the vacana style appeared to be most suitable as a medium of expression for the devotees. Not only Basava but also many other devotees contributed considerably to the spiritual literature by their beautiful vacanas.

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[1] J.N. Farquhar in a letter to the Rev. James Matthews in Bangalore, September 16th, 1914; following considerations from a letter to the same, dated January 21st, 1916; both letters in the archives of Bishop N.C. Sargant in the U.T.C. library at Bangalore.

The vacana literature reveals that mystical deepening went together with a new experience of community life in which radical social changes were inescapable. The belief that the liṅga dispels every pollution is repeatedly expressed in the poems; and so is one of its consequences: the abolishment of all caste distinctions. The vacanas confirm that devotees of low-caste background, even so-called untouchables, were admitted into the community without any restriction. Similarly, gender roles were conceived in a new way by the Vīraśaiva poets: women were entitled to full participation in the community. This was legitimated by the religious conviction that all human beings are basically equal since it is the same divine principle which dwells in all beings. Many vacanas testify to such an egalitarian social conception. Even androgyne metaphors are sometimes used to express the new socio-religious experience in which women and men shared alike. And Basava did not hesitate to renounce his own Brāhmaṇa background in order to display his strong solidarity with untouchable devotees by referring to them as his father, grandfather, or uncle.

The Vīraśaiva awakening was not meant for those who wanted to renounce all worldly life in order to attain the highest mystical goal. There were some ascetics who joined the community at Kalyāṇa for some time and then continued their solitary spiritual quest. But the great majority of the devotees did not cherish ideals of world-renunciation. Vīraśaivism offered them a way of life in which spirituality could be experienced within ordinary life. Therefore, marriage and sexuality were not repudiated, although unbridled passion was severely criticized. The new morality which was preached by the vacana poets aimed at a responsible behaviour within the usual social culture. This was the reason why professional duties were emphasized in the Vīraśaiva community. A vocation (kāyaka) was considered to be an indispensable condition for membership of the devotional community. Performing one's profession, especially in the case of manual labour, was even regarded as a way to come into contact with the godhead. The vocation was consequently called heaven (kāyakavē kailāsa). But professional work had to be done, of course, in the right spirit: it had to lead to service (dāsōha). The recognition of the value of all labour and the stress on service and charity had a great impact on the social life of the devotees.

The Vīraśaiva leaders attempted to build up a community in which spirituality could be practised by everyone without breaking away from normal worldly life. This required a strictly defined morality which had to be taught to the followers in an understandable and convincing manner. Moral instruction has an important place in the vacana literature;

obviously, it was used as a medium of mass education. A new religious practice with emphasis on personal devotion was combined with strict moral conduct and the development of strong personal responsibility. Old concepts, such as caste purity, found new application in the teaching of morality: thus, the devotees learned that a killer is 'low-caste' or 'untouchable', whereas one who does good to his fellow-creatures is 'well-born'.

There is much evidence that, for some time, the social ideals of the Vīraśaiva preachers were largely put into practice in the community at Kalyāṇa. Many devotees from every possible background joined Basava's experimental community. We know a good number of low-caste devotees who played a considerable role in the development of religious and social life. And the contribution of many female devotees, both high-born and low-born, is likewise very impressive. Numerous men and women who had so far been barred from participation in the socio-religious culture, found ample opportunities to develop their talents. But, at the same time, the Vīraśaiva community had to defend itself against powerful criticism from outside; because the revolutionary practice of the egalitarian community provoked strong reactions. And also inside the community, opinions differed greatly with regard to the rights of the lowest castes. Basava strongly advocated complete equality for all devotees; but other spokesmen tried to restrict the participation of those of very low birth. Similarly, the ascetics among the vacana poets did not share Basava's liberal attitude towards married life: world-renunciation remained their ideal.

It is not surprising that such a controversial style of community life could not persist for a long time. Probably it lasted for only about seven years; then the experimental community collapsed after a conflict with the king about caste rules. The devotees were scattered all over the country. When Basava died shortly after, less revolutionary leaders took over his position. Certainly, the revolutionary zeal of the first period did not come back anymore and the Vīraśaiva ideals were adapted to the new circumstances. On the other hand, by this moderation and by the dispersion of the devotees, it became possible to attract many other people. Vīraśaivism was not defeated by the persecution; under the new circumstances, it succeeded in gaining a firm foothold in many parts of Southern India.

As was also the case with several other Hindu schools, Vīraśaivism experienced a revival in the fifteenth century under the Vijayanagara kings. We find in the sources from this century a reinterpretation of the old Vīraśaiva ideas. Especially the authoritative Śūnyasaṃpādane dealt extensively with the old Vīraśaiva vacana literature and its socio-religious contents. It is remarkable that a part of the revolutionary heritage was still valued, although Vīraśaivism had become an established religion: even respected in court circles.

In particular, the work ethic of the early vacana poets was still presented without any restriction. The value of all kinds of labour remained to be propagated, as well as the spiritual necessity of performing a vocation. 'Work is heaven' was still the main slogan of Vīraśaiva teaching on professional life. And the connection of the concept of vocation with that of service can also be found in the fifteenth century sources. At least with regard to these topics, there is hardly any difference with the Vīraśaiva teachings of the initial period.

But the egalitarian ideals of early Vīraśaivism were certainly not preserved in every respect. The criticism of caste distinctions is conspicuously absent from fifteenth century Vīraśaivism. The texts about the rejection of caste are not included in the vacana compilations such as the Śūnyasaṃpādane. The names of some famous low-caste devotees of the twelfth century were still known and they were honoured as great saints. But the fact that it was then possible for low-caste people to join the fold did not apparently mean anything for the present situation. It seems that the practice of admitting converts from even the lowest Hindu ranks as equals to high-born believers had been stopped completely. The almost democratic organization of religious discourse was, of course, totally abandoned. Instead, highly-venerated gurus came into power.

The position of women in the community was also changed to some extent. The heritage of the initial period was not denied: homage was paid to the famous female mystics and authors of the twelfth century. And they were presented as examples with regard to women's own positions in religious matters; but their social independence was not emphasized. The message seems to be that Vīraśaiva women certainly have rights of their own but mainly in the domain of ritual and spirituality. And even those rights were questioned by ascetic authors who sometimes adopted an outrightly hostile attitude towards women.

The development of adjusting socio-religious ideals to the dominant values in society continued. The material from the colonial period reveals the strong influence of the traditional Hindu culture on the Vīraśaivas - or Liṅgāyatas as they are usually called in later times. Not much remained of the casteless fellowship of Kalyāṇa. The Liṅgāyata community had become a caste just like the others. And the members tried vigorously to attain as much caste status as possible. Internal solidarity was sacrificed to this aim. Actually, the Liṅgāyata community consisted of a conglomeration of castes which differed profoundly in status. In particular recent converts from lower background were not at all regarded as equals by the more established Liṅgāyata groups. Among the latter, however, we find more clearly some reminiscencies of the experimental community of the founding period. They knew a rather great occupational plurality, and the system of work and service was still functioning to some extent. Women were granted all ritual rights and they enjoyed a certain freedom within the own community, especially with regard to purity rules. But, in public, Liṅgāyata women were expected to behave just like other high-caste Hindu women: the dominant culture could not be offended.

A remarkable development, however, took place at the end of the nineteenth century. Several castes attempted to break the monopoly position of the Brāhmaṇa caste in the public administration. The Liṅgāyatas played a major role in this emancipation movement. It forced them to be aware of the history and peculiarities of their own tradition. And since education was a mighty weapon in the emancipation struggle, they developed an educational zeal which was quite in line with the beginning of their history. Many Liṅgāyata monasteries found a new task in establishing and financing schools and colleges.

In the modern period of Indian history, after Independence, we find the Liṅgāyata community in a continuing process of adaptation and evaluation of its own tradition. Several elements of that tradition appear to be quite useful in the new circumstances of a modernizing society. The emphasis on mass education, which was revitalized at the end of the last century, is still an important factor in Liṅgāyata culture. The Liṅgāyatas have become famous for their results in education. Their original tradition of a casteless community facilitated them to remove gradually their internal caste distinctions. But the Liṅgāyatas as a whole do still constitute a caste: their caste awareness is certainly not less than that of other higher Hindu castes. The position of women is definitely different from the higher Hindu castes. Liṅgāyata women enjoy considerably more ritual rights and are less impeded by purity regulations. The reinstatement of female teachership has certainly improved the image of Liṅgāyata tradition. Also with regard to work ethics and charity, Liṅgāyata concepts from the experimental community of the twelfth century are used in an inspiring way under new circumstances.

The heritage of Basava and his contemporaries is obviously a living tradition which is capable of inspiring a community even after eight centuries. It is especially the combination of sincere spirituality and social awareness which constitutes the strength of that tradition and its appeal: even today.

> Dayavillada dharmavadēvudayyā
> dayavē bēku sakalaprāṇigaḷellaṟalliyu.
> Dayavē dharmada mūlavayyā
> Kūḍalasaṅgayyanantalladollanayyā.[2]

> What is religion without compassion?
> Compassion must be towards all living beings.
> Compassion is the root of religion.
> *The Lord of the Meeting Rivers* is not pleased
> by what is not like that!

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[2] BASAVA, 247 (cf. MENEZES, ANGADI, p. 81; ARYA, p. 39; IYENGAR, p. 14; Michael Prakash SAMARTHA, *The Compassionate Basava*, Ph.D. thesis, Hartford, 1972, p. 175; THEODORE, HAKARI, p. 68; UMASHANKAR, p. 26).

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INDEX OF TERMS

Ādibaṇajiga	a Liṅgāyata caste of traders; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	94-5
advaita	non-dualism: monistic philosophy, in particular as systematized by Śaṅkara (ca. 800 A.D.)	111,163,174,199
Āgama	see: Śaivāgama	
agrahāra	village or land donated to Brāhmaṇas; centre of classical Hindu study	24,102,243
aikyasthala	phase of union with the godhead: the sixth stage in the ṣaṭsthala system	10,148,163
akka	elder sister	169,171,174,201
Ambiga	= Kabbēra: a caste of ferrymen and fishermen, partly Liṅgāyata	45
aṅga	common Vīraśaiva term for soul	9,163
aṅkita	= mudrike: the devotional signature at the end of a vacana by which the author can be identified (usually the name of his personal deity)	11
antyaja	a category of low-ranked castes, sometimes synonymous with Śūdra	25,102
Anubhava Maṇṭapa	'Hall of Spiritual Experience': meetingplace for devotees, founded by Basava at Kalyāṇa	4,13,15,63,120-3,175,182,197,258-9,282
anulōma	according to natural order, e.g. regarding an intercaste-marriage in which the woman belongs to a lower caste than the man	49
Ārādhya	a caste of Brāhmaṇas who have adopted part of the Vīraśaiva doctrine and culture; living chiefly in Andhra Pradesh where they constitute the highest section of the Liṅgāyata community	16,73,87,217
Ārebaṇajiga	a Liṅgāyata caste, converted Marāṭis	83,129
Aresamagāra	a subdivision of the Samagāra caste	84,130
ārati	the rite of waving a lamp in front of a sacred image or a holy person	217
āśrama	stage of life according to classical Hindu lore: student (brahmacāri), householder (gṛhastha), retired person (vanaprastha), ascetic (sannyāsi); also: centre of retreat for ascetics	152,229,275
aṣṭāvaraṇa	the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism: guru, liṅga, jaṅgama, pādōdaka, prasāda, vibhūti, rudrākṣa, and mantra	6,34,86,223,226-7,241
avarṇa	people who do not belong to one of the four classical caste categories (varṇa): untouchables	22-3,74
āya	= jajmānī: traditional economic system, based on the exchange of services and gifts in kind	100

aytana	(also: ayyatana) ritual by which a man from the Jaṅgama caste obtains priestly qualification	212,226,228
Baḍagi	a caste of carpenters, partly Liṅgāyata	94,135
balagey	right-hand: a category of non-Brāhmaṇa castes in Southern India, sharing certain rights and rituals	81
Baḷegāra	a Liṅgāyata caste with the traditional occupation of bracelet-making; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	94,135
Baṇajiga	a Liṅgāyata caste with the traditional occupation of trading	80,82,94-5, 103,128-9,135, 137,218-21
Baṇṇagāra	a Liṅgāyata caste with the traditional occupation of dyeing cloths	137-8
Bārika	a low non-Liṅgāyata caste, usually village-servants	238
Bārikēra	a subdivision of the Kabbēra caste	84,130
basadi	a Jaina monastery or temple	244
basavi	a woman dedicated to religious life, particularly among the Liṅgāyatas; performing ritual functions, mostly living on prostitution	129,213,222-3, 238
Basavi	a Liṅgāyata caste, constituted by Liṅgāyata basavis, mostly from the Calavādi caste	222
bayalu	= śūnya: void; indication of the final destination of human life according to Vīraśaivism	10,66,176-7
Bēḍa	a non-Liṅgāyata caste of huntsmen	46,76,238
beḍagina vacana	a riddle-verse, an allegorical poem	66,177
bhakta	one who is performing bhakti: a devotee	71,78,87,147- 8,150,162,189, 274
bhaktasthala	phase of devotion: the first stage in the ṣaṭstala system	9,13,67,148, 150
bhakti	devotion to a certain godhead as a way of salvation	1,10,29,38,116, 146-7,162,164, 184,190-1,257, 281
bhakti-bhaṇḍāri	treasurer of devotion, honorary title of Basava and Jakkaṇārya	3,259
bhaṇḍāri	treasurer at the court	3,104
bhasmasnāna	cleansing ritual in which sacred ashes are used instead of bathing	214
bhāvācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: cultivating the right emotions and motives	254
bhavi	a non-believer; term used by Vīraśaivas for all outsiders	27
Bhēri	a caste of traders, related to the Nagarta caste, partly Liṅgāyata	79,127,220

bhṛtyācāra	one of the five principles of conduct, pañcācāra: serving the devotees of Śiva	252-3
Biḷījāḍa	(or Biḷējāḍa) a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Kosṭi caste	83,94-5,129, 135
Biḷīmagga	a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Jāḍa caste	80,94,127
bilva	wood-apple tree (Aegle marmelos Corr.), sacred for Śaivas; the leaves are used in worship	33,129
Brāhmaṇa	the highest category in the Hindu caste system; the priestly caste; also: anything pertaining to this caste	*21-24, passim*
brahmapuri	a settlement of Brāhmaṇas; centre of classical Hindu study	243
Calageribaḷaki	a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	82,129
Calavādi	a Liṅgāyata caste, converted Mahārs; performing lower ritual services in the Liṅgāyata community	83,85-6,129, 223
Cālukya	a dynasty of rulers with Kalyāṇa as its capital; ousted by the Kaḷacuris and other feudatories ca. 1160 A.D.	3
Catura	a Liṅgāyata caste; traditional occupation: making and selling of blouse-cloth	83,129
Cikkakuruvinavaru	a caste of weavers, associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84,130
Cikkamaṭha	a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	95
Cilimeyagni	= Śīlavanta: a Liṅgāyata caste of traders, characterized by strict observance of religious precepts	82,85
Daṇḍāvati	a subdivision of the Kuḍavakkaliga caste	83,130
darśana	the act of beholding a holy person or an image of a god, which causes blessings	106,167
dāsōha	service, especially in the form of gifts to jaṅgamas or poor people; from 'dāsōhaṃ' - 'I am a servant'; cf. sōhaṃ	*110-4*,115,118, 120,122-3,125, *132-4,138-41*, 203,253,282
dēva	a godhead	205
dēvadāsi	a woman dedicated to a temple or god, performing artistic and ritual functions, including sacral prostitution	146,223,238
Dēvāṅga	= Haṭagāra: a caste of weavers, partly Liṅgāyata	84
Dēvasāli	a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
dharma	righteousness, duty; especially the complex of duties of a certain caste	157,250,255-6
dharmācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: practising religion	254
Dharmaśāstra	the classical religio-juridical literature of Hinduism, of which the Manusmṛti is the most important book	21,23,99,143-5, 146,196,243
Dhūḷapāvada	a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	82,129
digambara	'air-dressed': monastic of a Jaina school	169

dīkṣe	initiation; in particular the ritual in which a convert receives his personal liṅga or someone born as Liṅgāyata confirms his loyalty to the liṅga cult at adult age	6,75,85,96,211-2,228,241
divākīrti	term in the classical Hindu literature for a low-born person (often equated with a cāṇḍāla)	21
Ḍōhara or Ḍōra	a low caste of tanners, associated with the Liṅgāyata community	47,51,84,130
Dvāpara yuga	the third of the four ages of the world, in which dharma is reduced to half	255-6
dvija	twice-born: people entitled to an initiation ceremony, like the members of the first three varṇas	21,75
eḍagey	left-hand: a category of non-Brāhmaṇa castes in Southern India, sharing certain ritual customs	81
eḷahūṭe	form of execution in which the condemned person is dragged to death by an elephant	49
gaṇācāra	one of the five principles of conduct, pañcācāra: honouring the Śaiva tradition	252-3
Ganācāri	a Liṅgāyata caste with lower priestly functions; usually regarded as a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	82,94-5,129,220
Gaṇḍujōḷagiy-avaru	a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	94
Gaṅgaḍikāra Okkaliga	a caste of cultivators, partly Liṅgāyata	80,128
Gaṅgāpūje	worshipping water as an homage to the goddess Gaṅgā	233
Gaṅgōtri	the place where the holy river Ganges descends from the mountains; by extension: a holy place	230
Gāṇiga	= Tēli: a caste of oilpressers, of which the majority is Liṅgāyata	83,94-5,129,131,135-8,229
garbhagṛha	'womb-house': the inner sanctum of an Indian temple	247
Gavaḷi	a caste of cowherds, partly Liṅgāyata	83,129
ghaṭikāsthāna	a college for religious learning in medieval India	243
Golla	a caste of money transporters, partly associated with the Liṅgāyata community	79,127
guṇa	quality, attribute, or virtue	180
Gurava	= Jīra = Hūgāra: a caste with lower ritual functions, associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84,130
guru	a spiritual teacher; in Vīraśaivism to be honoured as giver of the liṅga; hence one of the eight sacred symbols (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	*passim*
gurukula	the 'spiritual family' of a teacher and his students; the house in which they live together; an educational institution	245

gurusthalada	a monastic tradition in Vīraśaivism, in which celibacy is not obligatory; hierarchically structured under five head monasteries (pañcācārya maṭha)	15,134,230, 263-8,270-4, 276,279
Haḍapada	= Nāvida = Nādiga; a caste of barbers, in majority Liṅgāyata	94-5,135-7
Haṇḍe Kuruba	= Haṇḍe Vajīra; a Liṅgāyata caste: converted Kurubas	79,83,127
Haṇḍe Vajīra	= Haṇḍe Kuruba; a Liṅgāyata caste: converted Kurubas	83,129
Haṇḍeyavaru	a Liṅgāyata caste: converted Kabbaligas	83,129
Harijana	'children of Visṇu': term for untouchables, introduced by Mahatma Gandhi	187
Haṭagāra	= Dēvāṅga; a caste of weavers, partly Liṅgāyata (see also: Kulācāradavaru and Śivācāri)	84,94-5,130, 135,137
Heḷava	= Pāṅgala, a caste associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84,130
Heggāṇiga	a Liṅgāyata caste of oilpressers (with a two oxen mill); also called Jyōtiphaṇada	79,221
Heṇṇujōḷagiyavaru	= Maṭhastharu: a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	94
Hirē-Kuruvinaseṭṭi	a subdivision of the Jāḍa caste	94
Hirē-Kuruvinavaru	= Kuruvinaseṭṭi: a Liṅgāyata caste of traders	83
Hirēmaṭha	a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	95
Holeya	originally a general term for untouchables; later: a caste of untouchables, non-Liṅgāyata	47,57,76,238
Holeyāce-baḷaki	a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	82,85,129
honnu heṇṇu maṇṇu	'gold, woman, land'; classical formulation of the objects of desire	116,124,149
Hūgāra	= Gurava = Jīra: a Liṅgāyata caste with lower ritual functions, especially supplying flowers; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	84,94-5,135, 137
Īḷigaru	a caste of palm tappers, sometimes associated with the Liṅgāyata community	86
iṣṭaliṅga	the personal liṅga, worn and worshipped by the Liṅgāyatas as the main symbol of their faith	6-9,30,171, 210-1,228,230
Jāḍa	= Jēḍa: a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers see also: Telugu Dēvāṅga	79,94,135,137
jagadguru	world-teacher: title of the abbots of important monasteries	229
Jaina Baṇajiga	a caste of traders, partly Liṅgāyata; converts from Jainism	79,126
jajmānī	= āya: traditional economic system based on the exchange of services and gifts in kind	100-1

jaṅgama	religious mendicant, worshipped by the Liṅgāyatas; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa); principle of dynamism as opposed to sthavara	4,6,33-4,36-7, 68,78-80,85-8, 96,105-6,110-3, 118,120-8,132-4,138,140,173, 184-6,203, 221-2,230,247, 252-3,258-60, 262-4
Jaṅgama	the priestly caste of the Liṅgāyata community in modern times	17,78,82-3,85, 94-6,98,129, 131-5,137,140, 211-2,215-7, 220-1,228-9, 265,267,271, 274
jaṅgamadīkṣe	initiation into priesthood or monastic life	229
janmasūtaka	(or jananasūtaka) pollution caused by childbirth	193
jāti	caste: the actually functioning entity in the social structure, cf. varṇa	*22-3*,29,54-5, 64,69,91,99
jātisūtaka	(mostly identical with kulasūtaka) pollution as a result of contact with low-caste people	193-4
Jēḍa	= Jāḍa: a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers; see also: Telugu Dēvāṅga	47
Jīra	= Gurava = Hūgāra: a caste with lower ritual functions, associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84
jñānācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: obtaining the knowledge of right conduct	254
Jyōtiphaṇada	'the people of the light business': name for a certain caste of oilpressers (Gāṇiga), partly Liṅgāyata; also called Heggāṇiga	79,127
Kabbaliga	a caste of fishermen, partly converted to Vīraśaivism (Haṇḍeyavaru)	83
Kabbēra	= Ambiga: a caste of ferrymen and fishermen, partly Liṅgāyata	45,84,130
Kailāsa	the abode of Śiva; the heaven	31,107-8,118, 120,138-9,282
Kaḷacuri	a dynasty of rulers, based in Maṅgaḷavēḍe; first feudatories of the Cālukyas, later independent kings at Kalyāṇa (till 1184 A.D.)	3
Kālāmukha	one of the schools of Śaivism; held a dominant position in medieval Karnataka where it had many monasteries	5,14,243-4, 257,263-4
Kalāvanta	a Liṅgāyata caste of dancers and prostitutes	83,129
Kali yuga	the last of the four ages of the world, the age of vice: the present age	255-6
kaḷḷubaḷḷi	kinship system of the Liṅgāyatas, characterized by intertwining of families	235

Kannaḍa	one of the Dravidian languages, spoken in Karnataka	*passim*
Kāpālika	one of the schools of Śaivism, known for its unconventional cultic tradition, due to Tantra influence	184,244
Kārejāḍa	a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers	95
Kārekula	a subdivision of the Gāṇiga caste; strict Liṅgāyatas	83,94,129,135
karma	the amount of merit or demerit as a result of the actions in one's previous lives, by which the fate of one's present life is determined	42,47,106,114,119,160-1,164,177
karṇāṭa-bālasikṣe	Kannaḍa-medium education of children in medieval Karnataka	245
Karṇāṭa Dēvāṅga	a caste of weavers, partly Liṅgāyata	79-81,127
karuṇā-prasāda	ceremonial coconut water, used in various Liṅgāyata rituals	233
kāyaka	vocation; any type of work, but particularly manual labour, performed as a religious duty by Liṅgāyatas	*105-110*,111,118,120,123-5,*132-4*,*138-41*,182,187,203,253,282
kāyakada Śiva-śaraṇeyaru	women devotees who followed a profession, especially among the twelfth century Vīraśaivas	181,197
kīrtane	a religious song	275
Koṣṭi	= Nīlakaṇṭha Liṅgāyata: a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers	83,129
kriyācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: performing the right rituals	254
Kṛta yuga	the first of the four ages of the world, the golden age	255-6
Kṣatriya	the second caste category in the classical Hindu varṇa system: the warriors; a non-Liṅgāyata caste (jāti) in some parts of Karnataka	*21-3*,43,53-4,73,75,81,91-2,99,233,237,243
Kuḍa-vakkaliga	a Liṅgāyata caste of cultivators	83,130
kūginamāri-tandegaḷu	a section of Jaṅgamas, with a special method of begging	133
kula	tribe; by extension: anything which determines a person by birth: family, gender, and especially caste	28,30,32,55,57
Kulācāradavaru Haṭagāra	a caste of weavers, associated with the Liṅgāyata community (section of the Haṭagāra or Dēvāṅga caste)	84
kulasūtaka	(mostly identical with jātisūtaka) pollution as a result of contact with low-caste people	64,193-4
Kumbāra	a caste of potters, in majority Liṅgāyata	83,94,128,130,135-7
Kuñca Okkaliga	a caste of cultivators, partly Liṅgāyata	79,127

Kuruba	a caste of shepherds, partly Liṅgāyata	76,79,83,127, 237
Kuruba Guru	a caste, associated with the Liṅgāyata community: the priests of the shepherds	86
Kurusāli	a Liṅgāyata caste, constituted by bastards from various background	83,130
Kuruvinaseṭṭi	= Hirē-Kuruvinavaru: a Liṅgāyata caste of traders; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Jāḍa caste	83,94,130
Kuruvinavaru	a Liṅgāyata caste of traders and weavers	85
Lāḍa	a subdivision of the Kumbāra caste	83,130
Lāḷagoṇḍa	a caste of cultivators, partly Liṅgāyata	79,127
liṅga	symbol of the god Śiva; originally a phallic emblem; the most important of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6-9, *passim*
liṅgācāra	one of the five principles of conduct, pañcācāra: worshipping exclusively the liṅga	252
Liṅgada-Samagāra	a subdivision of the Samagāra caste	84,130
liṅgadhāraṇa	the custom of wearing the personal liṅga (iṣṭaliṅga) on the body; the main characteristic of the Liṅgāyata community	6,227,231-2
liṅgadhāri Nagarta	a Liṅgāyata caste of traders, also known as Bhēri	220
liṅgadīkṣe	initiation into liṅga-wearing; the rite in which a convert receives his personal liṅga from the hands of his guru	75
Liṅgāyata	'liṅga-wearing': the usual name for the Vīraśaivas and their community in modern times	*passim*
Mādara	a low caste, non-Liṅgāyata	38,51-2
Mādiga	a low caste, non-Liṅgāyata	57,76,238
Maḍivaḷa	(also Maḍivāḷa) a Liṅgāyata caste with the traditional occupation of washing clothes	38,94,135,137
Mahār	a caste of Marāṭha origin, non-Liṅgāyata	73,83,85,238
mahā-vidyālaya	a college	269
māhēśvara-sthala	(also: mahēśvarasthala): phase of the master: the second stage in the ṣaṭsthala system	10,67,147-8
Mālegāra	a Liṅgāyata caste of gardeners	83,95,130,135
Māṅg	a caste of Marāṭha origin, non-Liṅgāyata	238
manṭapa	a hall for religious gatherings	
mantra	a sacred syllable or formula potent with numinous power; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6,9,256
Marāṭa	a caste from Maharashtra, non-Liṅgāyata	83,238
Marāṭi	pertaining to Maharashtra	83,129-30,218, 224,232
Marāṭhī	Indo-European language, spoken in Maharashtra	215
maṭha	a residence of a guru; a monastery	16,243,265-78

Maṭhapati	a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	82,94-5,129
Maṭhastaru	= Heṇṇujōḷagiyavaru: a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	94
Māyā	the divine power of illusion, personified as a goddess	116,149
māye	illusion: the enchantment of the phenomenal world, by which man is kept from religious pursuits	9,207
Mēdara	a caste of basket makers, partly Liṅgāyata	38,95,136
Meḷpāvaḍadavaru	a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	94
miṇḍa jaṅgama	= viṭa jaṅgama = sukhi jaṅgama: a mendicant who has not renounced enjoyment and sexual passion (probably belonging to one of the Tantra schools)	184
Miṇigadika	a subdivision of the Kuḍavakkaliga caste	83,130
Mōcigāra	a subdivision of the Samagāra caste	84,130
mudrike	= aṅkita: the devotional signature at the end of a vacana by which the author can be identified (usually the name of his personal deity)	11,46,157,258
mūkakāyaka	a method of begging, practised by a certain section of Jaṅgamas	133
mukti	release from the chain of birth, death, and rebirth; ultimate liberation; union with the godhead	10,28
muḷḷahāvige-kāyakadavaru	a section of Jaṅgamas, with a special method of begging	133
Nādiga	= Nāvida = Haḍapada: a caste of barbers, in majority Liṅgāyata	83,130-1
Nāgalika	a Liṅgāyata caste, originally with the occupation of sewing	83,130
Nagarta	a caste of merchants, part of which is Liṅgāyata; see: Bhēri	220
naiṣṭhika brahmacāri	a student who has taken a vow of lifelong celibacy	245
nāmaṃ	mark on the forehead which indicates to which cult one belongs	72
nandidhvaja	religious banner with a bull on it: symbol of various Śaiva communities	75
Nāvida	= Nādiga = Haḍapada: a caste of barbers, in majority Liṅgāyata	83,95,136-7
Nāyaka	a caste of hunters, partly converted to Vīraśaivism	95,136
nāyinār	Tamil Śaiva saint (Tamil: nāyaṉmār); the lives of these 63 nāyinārs are described in the Tamil classical work Periyapurāṇam; in Vīraśaiva literature, they are often called purātanaru - the ancient saints	36,39,112,152
Nīlakaṇṭha Liṅgāyata	= Koṣṭi: a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers	83
Nīligāra	a Liṅgāyata caste of indigo dyers	84,130
nirābhāri Vīraśaiva	a term for monastic Vīraśaivas	87

nirvāṇa	final destination of human life; a Buddhist term, also used in Vīraśaivism	10
niṣkāma-karma	the doctrine that work must be done without attachment to the results	106
nityācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: developing a spirit of renouncement	254
Noṇaba Okkaliga	a caste of cultivators, partly Liṅgāyata	80,128
Nōnamaṭhada Śīlavantaru	a subdivision of the Baṇajiga caste	94
Nyāya	one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism: the Logical School; classed together with the Vaiśeṣika	28
Okkaliga	farmer; in modern times: name of a large caste of cultivators, non-Liṅgāyata (also: Vakkaliga)	76,92-3,237
Padasāli	a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
Padasalagi-jāḍa	a subdivision of the Koṣṭi caste	83,129
Padmasāli	a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
pādōdaka	(also: padōdaka) water by which the feet of holy men are ritually washed; used in various Liṅgāyata rituals; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6,228,233
pāhareda-kāyakadavaru	a section of Jaṅgamas, with a special method of begging	133
Pākanāḍi Jōgi	a caste of dealers in herbal medicines, associated with the Liṅgāyata community (also Handi Jōgi)	79,127
pañcācāra	the five principles of conduct, viz. liṅgācāra, sadācāra, Śivācāra, gaṇācāra, bhṛtyācāra	*252-4*,258
Pañcācāra	= Pañcamasāli: a Liṅgāyata caste	137
pañcācārya maṭha	the five head monasteries of the gurusthalada tradition	78,265,267,271,273,276
Pañcāḷa	a caste of artisans; in modern times: Viśvakarma; part used to wear the liṅga, but mostly they are not regarded as Vīraśaivas	79,81,91,95,127-8,136
pañcama	an untouchable, in particular the name for Holeyas and Mādigas in Mysore	81
Pañcama Baṇajiga	a Liṅgāyata caste, consisting of families of converts from the first centuries	78,80-1,126,128,131
pañcamakāra	the five ma-sounds: the five elements of a Tantra ritual, viz. madya (liquor), māṃsa (meat), matsya (fish), mudrā (aphrodisiac cereals, also interpreted as a certain hand gesture), and maithuna (coition)	184
Pañcama Kumbāra	a caste of Liṅgāyata potters	80,127

Pañcamasāli	(sometimes Pañcācāra): a Liṅgāyata caste, consisting of families of converts from the first centuries; the term is sometimes used to denote the complete category of original converts (True Liṅgāyatas)	82,85-6,95,129, 131,136-7
Pañcamasāli Tōṭiga	a Liṅgāyata caste of gardeners	95
pañcapīṭha	the five holy seats, viz. of the pontiffs of the five head monasteries in the gurusthalada tradition	227
pañcasūtaka	the five forms of pollution according to classical Hindu lore: janmasūtaka, jātisūtaka, prētasūtaka, rajaḥsūtaka, and ucchiṣṭasūtaka	194,213
pandal	a temporary shed of leaves, cloth, etc., erected for marriages or other gatherings	233
Pāṇḍuraṅga	a term for Tamil Liṅgāyatas	210
Pāṅgala	= Heḷava: a caste associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84
Paradēśi	a subdivision of the Kumbāra caste	83,130
pardā	seclusion of women, as practised in Islam	223-4
Parit	a caste of washermen, associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84,130
Pāśupata	one of the schools of Śaivism, according to tradition founded by the sage Lakulīśa	5,244
pāṭhaśāle	a college, esp. for the study of Sanskrit	269
patita	someone who is expelled from his caste after misbehaviour	21
paṭṭada maṭha	a regional monastic centre of the gurusthalada tradition, a sort of branch of one of the pañcācārya maṭhas	265
Paṭṭasāle	a Liṅgāyata caste of silk-weavers	216
pīṭha	the seat of a guru	230
prāṇaliṅga	the divine principle of the individual's life	262
prāṇaliṅgisthala	the phase of the Liṅga in the life-breath: the fourth stage in the ṣaṭsthala system	10,148
prasāda	gift of grace: food presented to guru or jaṅgama and, after being blessed, given back to the devotees; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6,9,34,68,112, 122,132,173
prasādisthala	phase of the receiver of grace: the third stage in the ṣaṭsthala system	10,148
pratilōma	against natural order, e.g. with respect to an intercaste-marriage in which the women belongs to a higher caste than the man	49
prētasūtaka	(or maraṇasūtaka): pollution by death, e.g. by contact with a corpse	193
Pūjāri	a Liṅgāyata caste with lower ritual functions; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	95
pūje	worship; especially offering flowers, fruits, etc. to images of gods or the liṅga	9

puṇyastrī	meritorious woman: honorary title of several married women who wrote vacanas	187
purātanaru	the ancient saints: see: nāyinār	36
Pūrva-mīmāṃsā	one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism; classed together with the Uttaramīmāṃsā or Vedānta	28
rajaḥsūtaka	pollution by menstruation	193
Rājapūta	from Rajputana (Northern India)	83,130
Reḍḍi	a caste of cultivators, partly Liṅgāyata	80,95,128,136
rudrākṣa	dried berries from a certain tree, worn stringed and used as rosary; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6,9,186,211
sadācāra	one of the five principles of conduct, pañcācāra: behaving honestly	252-3
Sādaru (Okkaliga)	a caste of cultivators, in majority Liṅgāyata	80,95,128,137, 267,274
Saib	a Liṅgāyata caste of artists and prostitutes	223
Śaiva	relating to the god Śiva; a devotee of Śiva	*passim*
Śaivāgama	holy scriptures of the Śaiva tradition, the oldest parts dating back to the fifth century A.D.	29,43,230,254
Sajjana Gāṇiga	a subdivision of the Gāṇiga caste; with Brāhmaṇa customs	83,129
Sajjana Nādiga	a subdivision of the Nādiga caste	83,130
Sakkulasāli	a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
śakti	strength, power; the creative energy of the divine; female aspect of the godhead; usually personified as the wife of Śiva	9,164,195,197, 205
śakti-viśiṣṭādvaita	the philosophical position of Vīraśaivism: monism qualified by the divine energy	9,212
Sāle	(or Sāli) a caste of weavers, partly Liṅgāyata	79,84,86,127, 130
samādhi	trance, state of mind in which the union with the godhead is experienced; place where a saint died; by extension: any tomb of a devotee	230
Samagāra	a caste of shoemakers, partly associated with the Liṅgāyata community	84-5,130
sāmānya bhakta	a term for laymen who have not taken certain vows	87
sāmānya jaṅgama	married priets; usually a subdivision of the Jaṅgama caste	82,87,94-5, 129,133
sāmānya Vīraśaiva	ordinary Vīraśaivas: those who have not taken certain vows	87
Samasāle	(or Samasāli); a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers; sometimes regarded as a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130,220
samaya	monastic order, especially in the virakta tradition	262,266,273

Sāṅkhya	one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism, ascribed to the sage Kapila; classed together with the Yoga	28
sannyāsa	world-renouncement; the last stage of life according to the classical Hindu lore; the principle of monastic or ascetic life	169
saptācāra	seven principles of conduct, viz. kriyācāra, jñānācāra, bhāvācāra, satyācāra, nityācāra, dharmācāra, sarvācāra	254
śaraṇa	an adept who has reached the fifth stage of the ṣaṭsthala system; often used in Vīraśaivism as a synonym of devotee	10,26,35,39,41, 44-5,52,56,62, 64-5,70,108, 118,120,148, 151,161-2,166, 170,182,201, 207,254,273
śaraṇa mēla	a large meeting of Liṅgāyata devotees	50,230
śaraṇammanavaru	female Vīraśaiva saints	212
śaraṇasthala	phase of the surrendered: the fifth stage in the ṣaṭsthala system	10,148,151,156, 161,163,197,207
sarvācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: striving for the ultimate liberation	254
sati	self-immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre, as formerly practised among high-caste Hindus	146,219-20
satipati-bhakti	type of mysticism in which the bond with godhead is experienced analogous to marital relationship	170
ṣaṭsthala siddhānta	the doctrine of the six stages in the spiritual development of the devotee: bhaktasthala, māhēśvarasthala, prasādisthala, prāṇaliṅgisthala, śaraṇasthala, and aikyasthala	9,147,150-1, 156,163
satyācāra	one of the seven principles of conduct, saptācāra: defending the truth	254
Sēṇigāra	a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers	79-80,82,127
Śīlavanta	= Cilimeyagni; a Liṅgāyata caste of traders, characterized by strict observance of religious precepts	82,85,95,129
Śivācāra	one of the five principles of conduct, pañcācāra: treating the devotees of Śiva as one's family	107,252-3
Śivācāri	a Liṅgāyata caste of weavers: Liṅgāyata Haṭagāras	84,130
Śivācārya Okkaliga	a Liṅgāyata caste of cultivators	80,128,221
Śivasimpiga	a Liṅgāyata caste of tailors	95,136-7
Śivayōgi	a Śaiva mendicant; sometimes used as a caste name	95,136
sōhaṃ	'I am He': union with the Absolute; the goal of religious life in the advaita schools; cf. dāsōha	112-3

śrēṇi	a guild, especially of craftsmen	103
sthāvara	fixed, stable, the static principle as opposed to jaṅgama	247
Śuddhasāli	a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
Śūdra	the fourth caste category in the classical Hindu varṇa system: the labourers and servants	16-17,*21-3*,43, 53-4,71-5,88, 91,97,99,144, 243
sukhi jaṅgama	= miṇḍa jaṅgama = viṭa jaṅgama: a mendicant who has not renounced enjoyment and sexual passion (probably belonging to one of the Tantra schools)	184
Sukusāli	a subdivision of the Sāli caste	84,130
sūḷe	a prostitute, a courtesan	186-7
śūnya	= bayalu: void; indication of the final destination of human life according to Vīraśaivism	10,66,176
śūnya-siṃhāsana	throne of the void; erected by Basava for Allama as the supreme guru, according to Vīraśaiva tradition	14,261,266
svāmi	usual title for any religious dignitary, also for the Liṅgāyata jaṅgamas	*passim*
svatantra	independent; a group of monasteries which belong neither to the gurusthalada nor to the virakta tradition	274,277
Taḍḍodi	a subdivision of the Kuḍavakkaliga caste	83,130
Tantra	a form of Hinduism in which the worship of the divine principle of energy, śakti, is the central point	184,186,244
tekki-kāyakadavaru	a section of Jaṅgamas, with a special method of begging	133
Tēli	= Gāṇiga: a caste of oilpressers, of which the majority is Liṅgāyata	83
Telugu	one of the Dravidian languages, spoken in Andhra Pradesh	14,20,50,63,79, 83,130,184
Telugu Dēvāṅga	a caste of weavers, partly Liṅgāyata; sometimes called Jāḍa	79,127
Trētā yuga	the second of the four ages of the world, in which dharma is declining	255-6
tripadi	a poem of three lines in a certain metre	14,69
ucchiṣṭa-sūtaka	pollution by spittle and food leftovers	193
uḍike	a simple ceremony to marry a widow	236
upakurvāṇa	a temporary celibate student who is to become a householder	245
upanayana	initiation ritual for Brāhmaṇa boys: investment with the sacred thread	2,21
Uttara-mīmāṃsā	= Vedānta: one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism, classed together with the Pūrvamīmāṃsā	28
vacana	a religious poem in free verse, typical of the Vīraśaiva spirituality	*11-13*, *passim*
vacanakāra	an author of vacanas	*passim*

Vaiśeṣika	one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism: the Atomic School; classed together with the Nyāya	28
Vaiṣṇava	relating to the god Viṣṇu; a devotee of Viṣṇu	5,15-6,72,79-82,126-8,244
Vaiśya	the third caste category in the classical Hindu varṇa system: the merchants and farmers	*21-23*,43,53-4,73,75,99
Vālmīki	a non-Liṅgāyata caste	238
vaṇijaka	merchant (Sanskrit; Kannaḍa: baṇajiga)	128
varṇa	caste category; element of the classical fourfold structure of society, according to Hindu tradition	*21-24*,33,54-5,60,71,74,88,91,97,99,101,243
varṇāśrama-dharma	the classical Hindu division into four caste categories and four stages of life	29,54
Vedānta	= Uttaramīmāṃsā: one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism, classed together with the Pūrvamīmāṃsā	28,154
vēśye	a prostitute, a courtesan	184
vibhūti	sacred ash, ritually prepared of burnt cow-dung; one of the eight sacred symbols of Vīraśaivism (aṣṭāvaraṇa)	6,211,227
vihāra	a Buddhist monastery	244
virakta	a monastic tradition in Vīraśaivism, in which celibacy is obligatory; classified into some samayas, although loosely organized	15,82,89,129,133-4,138,208-9,251,*263-7*,269-79
viśēṣa bhakta	a term for laymen who have taken certain vows	87
viśēṣa jaṅgama	a term for celibate monastics in the Liṅgāyata community	87
viśēṣa Vīraśaiva	a term for Vīraśaivas who have taken certain vows	87
viṭa jaṅgama	= miṇḍa jaṅgama = sukhi jaṅgama: a mendicant who has not renounced enjoyment and sexual passion (probably belonging to one of the Tantra schools)	184
yajamānaru	master; obedient expression by which women refer to their husband	156
Yattiraka	a subdivision of the Kuḍavakkaliga caste	83,130
yoga	(yōga) controlled meditation, ascetic practice	108,191,244,275
Yoga	one of the six classical philosophical systems of Hinduism, founded by Patañjali; classed together with the Sāṅkhya	28
yogi	(yōgi) someone who practises yoga; an ascetic	191,260
yuga	one of the four ages of the world, according to Hindu mythology	255-6

INDEX OF NAMES
of Vīraśaivisa Personalities

Ajagaṇṇa	fl. ca. 1160; a liṅga-wearing ascetic; brother of Muktāyakka	171-174
Akka	(Akka Mahādēvi, Mahādēviyakka) fl. ca. 1165; female wandering ascetic; died at young age at Śrīśaila; author of vacanas	4,11,29,30,116-7,164-5,*166-70*,174,197,200-1,208,229-230,257
Akkamma	name of two female vacanakāras, fl. ca. 1165	175
Akka-nāgamma	(or Akkanāgāyi) fl. ca. 1165; sister of Basava and mother of Cannabasava; a vacanakāra	44,64,159-60,178
Allama	(Allama Prabhu) fl. ca. 1165; famous ascetic from Baḷḷigāve; foremost guru of the Vīraśaiva community at Kalyāṇa; an author of vacanas	4,11,14,36-7,54-5,63-67,70,113-4,116-7,119-120,123-6,149-50,160,169,171-2,177,190-2,196,199-201,203,205,255-7,259-62,264,266
Ammavve	fl. ca. 1165; one of the female śaraṇas; a spinner	181
Appaṇṇa	(Haḍapada Appaṇṇa) fl. ca. 1165; a barber and author of vacanas	44,64-5,70,109,131,178,201,260
Baṅkanna	(Suṅkada Baṅkanna) fl. ca. 1165; a collector of taxes and vacanakāra	109
Basava	(or Basavaṇṇa, Basavēśvara) 1105?-1167; treasurer of king Bijjaḷa II; founder of the Vīraśaiva movement; most important vacanakāra	*2-5, passim* vacanas:11-2,25-7,31-2,34-5,37,40-1,51-2,55-6,59,103-5,107,110-1,115-6,147-8,152,155-7,161-2,188,192-3,195-6,204,246,248,250-1,257,260-1,285
Basavaṇṇa	(Bāci kāyakada Basavaṇṇa) fl. ca. 1165; a carpenter and author of vacanas	109
Bhīmakavi	14th century; author of the Kannaḍa Basavapurāṇa (1369)	13,47-8,50,52,110,152,184-5
Bommaṇṇa	(= Telugu Bommayya?) fl. ca. 1165; a śaraṇa; probably from a caste of hunters	44
Bommaya	fl. ca. 1160; one of the murderers of king Bijjaḷa II	49
Bommayya	(Kinnari Bommayya or Brahmayya) fl. ca. 1165; goldsmith and vacanakāra; famous lute-player	52,200
Brahmayya	see: Bommayya	
Cāmarasa	fl. ca. 1430; author of the Prabhuliṅgalīle	13,259-61

Candayya	(Nuliya Candayya) fl. ca. 1165; a ropemaker and author of vacanas	67,*122-24*,125
Cannabasava	(or Cennabasava, Cannabasavaṇṇa) fl. ca. 1170; nephew of Basava; leader of the Vīraśaiva movement after Basava; author of vacanas	4,11,14-5,41-5,53-4,65-7,70,73,112-3,153-4,159,160,169,178,192-4,202,252-4,257-8
Cannamma	(Rāṇi Cannamma) Queen of Keḷadi 1671-1697	224
Cannamma	(Rāṇi Cannamma) 1778-1829; Queen of Kittur	*224-6*,227,240
Cannappa-kavi	eighteenth century; author of the Śaraṇalīlāmṛta	50
Cannayya	(Mādara Cannayya) fl. ca. 1165; author of vacanas; used the name of one of the 63 old Śaiva saints (a stableman of one of the Tamil Cōḷa kings)	39,57-8 see also: 37-8,51-2
Cauḍayya	(Ambigara Cauḍayya); fl. ca. 1165; a ferryman and author of vacanas	44,*45-7*,48,58,62,109
Cauḍayya	(Bahurūpi Cauḍayya) fl. ca. 1165; an actor or clown and vacanakāra	44,109
Cikkayya	fl. ca. 1165; a śaraṇa	52
Dāsimayya	(Dēvara Dāsimayya, or Jēḍara Dāsimayya) 11th century; weaver and vacanakāra, forerunner of Vīraśaivism	11,47,158-9,189-90,196
Dēśikēndra	(Śrī Jagadguru Dēśikēndra Mahāsvāmigaḷu) abbot of the Suttur maṭha since 1986	272,277
Ēkīkaraṇa Svāmīji	'the unification priest': the abbot of the Uruvakonda maṭha in the 1950s	274
Ēkōrām-ārādhya	alleged founder of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Shrishaila; actual date unknown	265
Gaṅgādhara	(Śrī Jagadguru Gaṅgādhara Mahāsvāmīji) abbot of the Mūrusāvira maṭha at Hubli 1901-1925	269
Gaṅgādhara	(Śrīmanmahārāja Nirañjana Jagadguru Śrī Gaṅgādhara Rājāyōgīndra Mahāsvāmīji) b. 1927; abbot of the Mūrusāvira maṭha at Hubli since 1958	14,97,138,140
Gaṅgādhara	(Śrī 1008 Jagadguru Prasanna Rēṇuka Vīra Gaṅgādhara Dēśikēndra Śivācārya Mahāsvāmīji) pontiff of the pañcācārya pīṭha of Balehonnur till 1972	273
Gaṅgāmbike	fl. ca. 1165; wife of Basava; an author of vacanas	3,175,178,185
Gaṅgamma	(Hādarada kāyakada Mārayyagaḷa puṇyastrī Gaṅgamma) fl. ca. 1165; wife of a certain Mārayya (not Mōḷigeya Mārayya); a prostitute and vacanakāra	108-9,181,187
Ghaṭṭivāḷayya	fl. ca. 1165; an actor and author of vacanas	262
Goggavve	fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras	159
Guḍḍavve	(Battalēśvarana puṇyastrī Guḍḍavve) wife of Battalēśvara; one of the female vacanakāras; fifteenth century?	175

Halakatti	(Dr. P.G. Haḷakaṭṭi) 1880-1964; a lawyer at Bijapur; first editor of the vacana literature	19,77
Haraḷayya	executed 1167; a shoemaker; one of the śaraṇas	*48-50*,51,62
Harihara	(or Harīśvara) fl. ca. 1200; author of the Basavarājadēvara ragaḷe	13,168,184
Ja.Cha.Ni.	(Dr. Ja.Ca.Ni. or Śrīśaila Niḍumāmiḍi Jagadguru Śrī Cannabasavarāja Dēśikēndra Mahāsvāmigaḷu) b. 1909; modern Liṅgāyata author at Bangalore; claims the pañcācārya pīṭha of Śrīśaila	14
Jagadēva	fl. ca. 1160; one of the murderers of king Bijjaḷa II	49
Jakkaṇārya	fl. ca. 1435; minister of King Prauḍhadēvarāya II	259
Jayadēva	(Śrīman Mahārāja Nirañjana Jagadguru Jayadēva Murughārājēndra Mahāsvāmi) 1874-1956; pontiff of the virakta maṭha at Chitradurga from 1903 till 1956	251
Kakkayya	(Dōhara Kakkayya) fl. 1165; tanner and author of vacanas	37-9,47,51-2,64
Kāḷavve	(Bāci kāyakada Basavayyagaḷa puṇyastrī Kāḷavve) fl. ca. 1165; wife of the carpenter Basavaṇṇa; one of the female vacanakāras	181
Kāḷavve	(Kadira kāyakada Kāḷavve) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a spinner	109,181
Kāḷayya	fl. ca. 1165; a śaraṇa	44
Kalyāṇamma	fl. ca. 1165; wife of Haraḷayya; a śaraṇa	48
Kāmamma	(Kālakaṇṇiya Kāmamma or Kāyamma) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a rope-maker	109,181
Kāmidēva	(Taḷavāra Kāmidēva) fl. ca. 1165; a watchman and author of vacanas	109
Kāśinātha Śāstri	(Paṇḍita Kāśinātha Śāstri) b. 1895; head of a maṭha at Naganur; spokesman of the gurusthalada tradition	78,265
Kēśirāja	(Mogavāḍada Kēśirāja) fl. ca. 1165; a śaraṇa; probably one of the king's ministers	44
Kētaladēvi	fl. ca. 1165; wife of Guṇḍayya; one of the female vacanakāras; a potter	181
Koppal	V.R. Koppal; a teacher at Dharwar; founder of the Navakalyāṇa maṭha (1935)	274
Kumārasvāmīji	(Śrī Hānagalla Kumārasvāmīji or Kumāraśivayōgi) 1867-1930; inspirator of the All-India Vīraśaiva Mahāsabha and founder of the Śivayōgamandira	75
Kumārasvāmīji	(Mahātapasvi Mahārāja Śrī Kumārasvāmīji) b. 1909; head of the Navakalyāṇa maṭha at Dharwar 1935-1965; since then based in his own Tapōvana at Dharwar	14,138,140,272,*275*,278
Lakkamma	(Āyidakki Lakkamma) fl. ca. 1165; wife of Āyidakki Mārayya; one of the female vacanakāras; a rice gleaner	109,*120-1*,125-6,181-3,190,203-4

Lakkaṇṇa Daṇḍēśa	fl. ca. 1435; minister of King Prauḍhadēvarāya II	259
Liṅgamma	fl. ca. 1165; wife of Haḍapada Appaṇṇa; an author of vacanas	175
Liṅgānanda	(Svāmi Liṅgānanda) b. 1931; founder of the Viśva Kalyāṇa Mission	227,229,274
Mācayya	(Maḍivāḷa Mācayya; called Maḍivāḷamācitandegaḷu) fl. ca. 1165; a washerman and author of vacanas	37-9,44,*64-7*,70,109,122,262
Mādarasa	(Sakalēśa Mādarasa) fl. ca. 1165; a ruler and author of vacanas	109
Maddayya	(Okkalu Maddayya) fl. ca. 1165; a farmer and author of vacanas	109
Madhuvayya	(or Madhuvarasa); fl. ca. 1165; one of the king's ministers; a śaraṇa	49-50
Mahādēvi	(Jagadguru Māte Mahādēvi M.A.) b. 1946; the first female jagadguru; leader of the Viśva Kalyāṇa Mission	14,48,97,108,138,140,225,227-8,*229-30*,241,274,278
Mahādēviyamma	(or Rāṇi Mahādēvi) fl. ca. 1165; wife of Mōḷigeya Mārayya; one of the female vacanakāras and a spiritual teacher	164,*179-81*,195,197,202-3
Mahāmane	(Swami Mahamane) modern Liṅgāyata author (esp. radio-plays)	14
Mallamma	seventeenth century; a female Liṅgāyata hero	224
Mallikārjuna	(Svāmi Mallikārjuna) head of the Śivānanda maṭha (svatantra) at Gadag in the 1970s	229
Mallinātha	(Miṇḍa Mallinātha) fl. ca. 1165; one of the 'sensual jaṅgamas'	44
Mañcanna	(Śivaleṅka Mañcanna) fl. ca. 1165; a scholar and author of vacanas	109
Mārayya	(Āyidakki Mārayya) fl. ca. 1165; a rice gleaner and vacanakāra	67,106-7,120-1,125-6,139,182-3,190,202-4
Mārayya	(Mōḷigeya Mārayya) fl. ca. 1165; a prince from Kashmir who lived as a woodcutter in Kalyāṇa; a vacanakāra	164,179,194-5,197,202-3
Māritande	(Sattige kāyakada Māritande) fl. ca. 1165; an umbrella-holder and vacanakāra	109
Maruḷārādhya	alleged founder of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Ujjaini; a twelfth century devotee?	265
Masaṇamma	(Eḍemaṭhada Nāgidēvayyagaḷa puṇyastrī Masaṇamma) wife of Nāgidēva; one of the female vacanakāras; fl. ca. 1500?	175
Māyidēva	15th century, author of the Anubhava Sūtra (in Sanskrit)	13,259
Molleya	fl. ca. 1165; one of the murderers of king Bijjaḷa II	49
Muktāyakka	fl. ca. 1165; a female wandering ascetic; sister of Ajagaṇṇa; author of vacanas	*171-4*,197,199
Nandikēśvara	17th century?; author of the Liṅgadhāraṇacandrikā (in Sanskrit)	13,213
Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi	date uncertain: fl. ca. 1500?; a Liṅgāyata mystic and author	87

Nīlamma	(or: Nīlāmbā, Nīlalōcane, Nīladēvi, Māyidēvi) fl. ca. 1165; wife of Basava; profound mystic and author of vacanas	3,65,160-1,*175-8*,179-80,197,201-2
Paṇḍitārādhya	alleged founder of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Kedar; actual date unknown	265
Piṭṭavve	fl. ca. 1165; one of the female śaraṇas; a seller of pancakes	109,181
Puttanna Chetti	(Divān bahaddūr rājasabhā bhūṣaṇa Dr. Sir K.P. Puṭṭaṇṇaśeṭṭaru) 1856-1938; minister at the Mysore court and one of the leaders of the Liṅgāyata community	75
Rāghavāṅka	early 13th century; author of the Siddharāmacāritra	5,13
Rāyamma	(Amuge Rāyamma) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras	175
Rēmamma	(Kannaḍi kāyakada Rēmamma) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a mirror-maker	109,181
Ṛemmave	fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; probably identical with Koṭṭanada Ṛemmavve	175
Ṛemmavve	(Kadira Ṛemmavve) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a spinner	109,181-2
Ṛemmavve	(Koṭṭaṇada Ṛemmavve) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female śaraṇas; a rice pounder	109,181
Rēvaṇārādhya	alleged founder of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Balehonnur; a twelfth century devotee?	265
Sajjaṅguḍa Amma	twentieth century; female mystic	229
Saṅganna	(Bokkasada Saṅganna) fl. ca. 1165; a steward and author of vacanas	109
Saṅganna	(Vaidya Saṅganna) fl. ca. 1165; a physician and author of vacanas	109
Saṅgayya	(Mugdha Saṅgayya) fl. ca. 1165; a devotee in the Kalyāṇa community	185-6
Saṅkavve	(Sūḷe Saṅkavve) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a prostitute	109,186-7
Śāntaliṅga-dēśika	seventeenth century; author of the Bhairavēśvarakāvyada kathāsūtraratnākara (1672)	50
Śāntayya	(Kōla Śāntayya); fl. ca. 1165; a śaraṇa; probably a palace guard	44
Śaraṇamma	twentieth century; female mystic at Sholapur	229
Sarvajña	probably 16th century; a wandering ascetic and author of tripadi poems	14,69-70,209
Satyakka	fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a sweeper	109,181
Siddhaliṅga	(Jagadguru Śrīman Nirañjana Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅga Mahāsvāmīji M.A.); abbot of the Tōṇṭadārya maṭha at Dambal-Gadag since 1974	138,241,272
Siddha-liṅgēśvara	(Tōṇṭada Siddhaliṅgēśvara Śivayōgi) end fifteenth century; ascetic and reorganizer of the virakta order; author of vacanas	14-5,67-70,124-6,205-10,262-4,266

Siddharāma	fl. ca. 1165; famous ascetic and promotor of charity from Sholapur; joined the Kalyāṇa community; author of vacanas	4-5,11,28-30,32-3,38,49,55,65,108,114,117,119,126,150-1,155,163,191,196,198,207-8,249,256-7,260-1
Siddhavīraṇārya	(Gūḷūra Siddhavīraṇārya) fl. ca. 1500; final revisor of the Śūnyasampādane	13,63
Siddhēśvara	(Śrī 1008 Jagadguru Sthira Paṭṭādhyakṣa Śrī Siddhēśvara Rājadēśikēndra Mahāsvāmigaḷu) pontiff of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Ujjaini since 1936	227,271-3
Siddhēśvaraliṅga	(Śrīmad Himavat Kēdār Jagadguru Siddhēśvaraliṅga Śivācārya Mahāsvāmigaḷu) present pontiff of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Kedar (Himalayas)	272
Siṅgirāja	fl. ca 1500; author of the Mahābasavarājacaritra	175
Śivabasava	(Śrī Śivabasava Svāmīji) b. 1891; head of the Rudrākṣi maṭha at Naganur since 1924	272
Śivabasava	(Vidvān Immaḍi Śivabasava Svāmi); present head of the Kundur maṭha and reader at the University of Mysore	272
Śivakumāra	(Śrī Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Śivakumāra Śivācārya Mahāsvāmīji) b. 1913; abbot of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha at Sirigere 1940-1979	277
Śivakumāra	(Dr. Śrī Śivakumāra Svāmīji) b. 1909; abbot of the Siddhagaṅgā maṭha near Tumkur since 1941	251,276
Śivamūrti	(Śrī Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Dr. Śivamūrti Śivācārya Mahāsvāmīji) b. 1947; abbot of the Taraḷabāḷu Jagadguru Bṛhanmaṭha at Sirigere since 1979	14,143,149,158,227-8,272,277
Śivarātrirājēndra	(Jagadguru Śrī Śivarātrirājēndra Mahāsvāmīji) 1916-1986; abbot of the Suttur maṭha 1934-1986	277
Śivayōgi	13th century; author of the Siddhāntaśikhāmaṇi (in Sanskrit)	13
Sōmamma	(Koṭṭaṇada Sōmamma or Sōmavve) fl. ca. 1165; one of the female vacanakāras; a rice pounder	109,181
Sōmanātha	(Pālkuriki Sōmanātha) 13th century; author of the Telugu Basavapurāṇamu	5,13,38,47,50,52,81,110,152,184-5,260
Śrīpati	(Śrīpati Paṇḍita) 14th century; author of the Śrīkara Bhāṣya (in Sanskrit)	13
Umāpati	Śrīmad Śrīśaila Jagadguru Umāpati Paṇḍitārādhya Śivācārya Mahāsvāmigaḷu) present pontiff of the pañcācārya pīṭha of Śrīśaila	272
Vīrammajī	eighteenth century; a female Liṅgāyata hero	224
Virūpākṣa	(Virūpākṣa Paṇḍita) 16th century; author of the Cannabasavapurāṇa (1584)	5,13,39,47-8,73,184,265
Viśvārādhya	alleged founder of the pañcācārya pīṭha at Benares; actual date unknown	265

Dr. J.P. Schouten (1949) studied theology and sociology at the Free University in Amsterdam. He specialized in phenomenology of religion, with special attention to Indian religions. He published a number of articles on Hinduism, in particular about Hindus in the Netherlands, and about Hindu-Christian dialogue. He made several study tours to Southern India in connection with his research on Vīraśaivism.

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